DECEMBER 1964

Commentary

VOLUME THIRTY-EIGHT, NUMBER SIX

NEGROES & JEWS: THE NEW CHALLENGE TO PLURALISM

NATHAN GLAZER

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THE STRANGE DEATH OF TORY ENGLAND: John Mander

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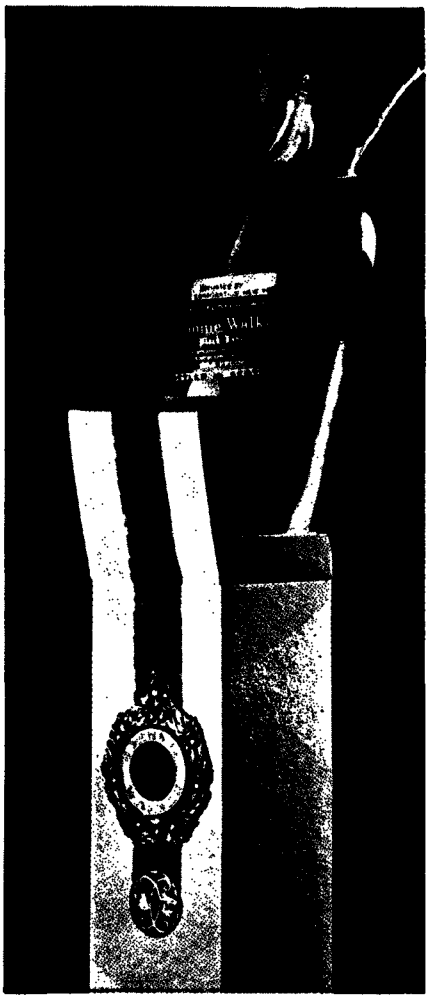

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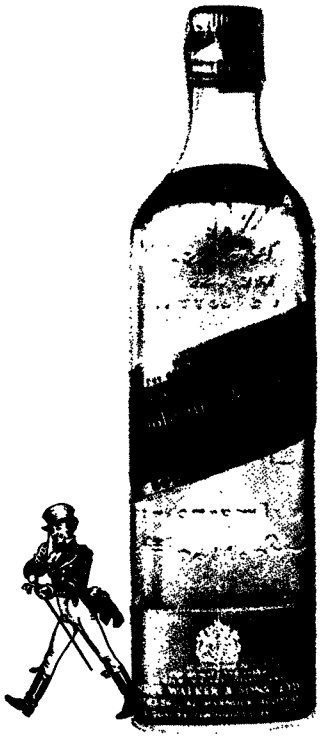

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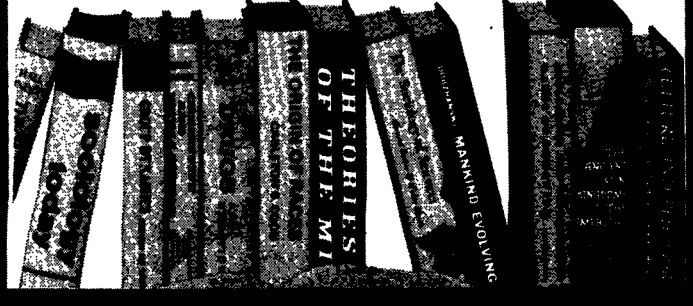

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The Proper Study of Men

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In reviewing Milton Rokeach's *The Three Christs of Ypsilanti: A Narrative Study of Three Lost Men* [June], George P. Elliott expends his considerable energies from the first paragraph on, in charging up the reader's adrenalin. But as for what the book contains —one remains uninformed. In describing what Rokeach "did to these madmen," "without their knowledge or permission," Elliott uses various tricks of rhetoric: "Wonderful," "yes, indeed," "My God!" "Alas," and here and there the exclamation point. He peppers the review throughout with value terms and various gibes and sneers, . . . not only against Rokeach but also against science generally and psychology as a science in particular. . . .

Implicit in this scoffing is an issue with which psychologists have long been familiar. Are men to study themselves? They have directed their curiosity at ants, algae, the distant stars, the dung beetle. But the area closest to them, their essential selves, is to remain a dark continent, unexplored, to be left entirely to the artistic temperament. Mr. Elliott reminds us that Cervantes knew all about it. True, and so did a few others. And were we all—or more of us, at least—Cervantes, Aeschylus, Dostoievski, Shakespeare, then a science of the human personality would not be necessary. But since such superb intelligences are so extremely rare, . . . something can be said for methodical approaches, for observations made under conditions of intellectual control. . . .

Mr. Elliott's very positive and finalistic judgment of Rokeach's book is that "as a scientific explanation of the human psyche, it is awful." A reviewer is, of course, obligated to state his honest judgment, but I find no evidence that Mr. Elliott, a writer of fiction, poetry, essays, and book reviews in literary magazines, is equipped to sit in judgment on science or on psychology.

This letter is not in support of Rokeach's book, which I have not seen, nor is it in defense of Rokeach, whom I do not know personally. But Elliott directs his scorn also at ". . . another behavioral scientist named Norman Cameron." I do know Cameron well. He has devoted a lifetime both as psychologist and psychiatrist to a careful, conscientious study of psychopathology. What sets Elliott up as an authority on Norman Cameron?

This review is an example of the abandon that characterizes the "romantic" temper in literature: egotistic, self-vaunting, and rationalized by a school of philosophy in which the world is self-centered and the individual is the Absolute. . . . About what Rokeach actually tried to do in this book we obtain only spotty information nearer the end of the review than its beginning. First, the verdict—off with their heads!—the evidence afterward. The reader acquainted with the field under investigation will slough off a review of this kind. . . . Where it can do harm is to the layman who seeks dependable guidance about ideas with which he has a limited acquaintance and of which he would like to know more.

SAMUEL J. BECK
Department of Psychology
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

George P. Elliott's incredible review of *The Three Christs of Ypsilanti* compounds, rather than clarifies, the fallacies of Dr. Rokeach's approach. Rokeach, as the fourth "God," is an irrelevant misconception: his shoddy scientific method is his biggest failure, although his motivations may be noble.

The careful investigator tries to extract data in a manner which enables him to predict and control (and thus, in part, to understand) specified behavior patterns. Assembling elementary data (which do not seem to interest Mr. Elliott) is a central objective of experimental psychology; it is only by this method that a scientific knowledge of human behavior will ever be realized.

Dr. Rokeach and many fellow social psychologists pursue the impossible task of attempting to analyze highly complex human behavior patterns with only an imperfect knowledge of the simpler (component?) units of behavior. By skipping conceptual stages, they fail as rigorous scientists.

But I am afraid that the stricter scientific psychology would inflame Mr. Elliott's ire even more than Dr. Rokeach's analysis. Mr. Elliott's apparent interest in abstruse complexities will not bring us closer to understanding the simplest realities.

MICHAEL TERMAN
Department of Psychology
Columbia University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his incredibly pompous critique, . . . George P. Elliott expresses the common sophomoric bromide that social scientists waste a lot of time questioning things that most of us take for granted. . . . Since Mr. Elliott spends a lot of space lecturing us about the beliefs of the scientist (in lieu of actually describing Rokeach's book), he must know that it is part of the belief system of all scientists to question all "truths" regardless of how obvious they may seem, . . . including such well-known truths as the flatness of the earth, the revolution of the sun around the earth, and the intellectual inferiority of Negroes. Elliott justifiably credits Dante with a brilliant insight—but to a scientist this insight takes the form of an interesting hypothesis. The fact that Elliott happens to believe it is true does not, in and of itself, place it beyond the domain of scientific inquiry. I wonder if Elliott has the perspicacity to appreciate the irony of his accusing Rokeach of playing God while, in the same breath, placing himself upon Olympus as the arbiter of what social scientists should and should not take for granted.

ELLIOT ARONSON
Department of Psychology
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

MR. ELLIOTT *writes*:

Professors Aronson, Beck, and Terman are offended that the report of an experiment by a reputable social psychologist has been subjected by a non-scientist to standards other than scientific.

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The Three Christs of Ypsilanti was subtitled "A Narrative Study of Three Lost Men" and was published not as a learned monograph for the profession but in good part as a story for the general public: among other things the book is a work of literature subject to literary judgment. Moreover, since it advances a theory of epistemology, it is subject to philosophical judgment as well. (For a cogent satire on the epistemological muddle and foolishness of a great deal of writing by psychologists, see "The Circumnavigation of Cognition" by Benbow F. Ritchie, professor of psychology at the University of California, in the *Psychological Review* for May 1953.) Whether my judgments on the literary and philosophical issues are good or bad, they are relevant to the book, and my not being a scientist has no bearing either on them or on my right to them. Storytelling and epistemology are not scientific enterprises.

But these are lesser quarrels. The graver one is ethical. Dr. Rokeach's experiment broke no laws, injured none of the subjects physically, and was intended to gather data of possible use to psychological theory and practice. The moral question is: Ought the actions of a psychologist during the performance of such an experiment be subjected to moral scrutiny? My three critics implicitly answer: No, these actions must be judged by scientific criteria. This attitude strikes me as having less in common with defending humane inquiry than with guarding a mystery cult, with high priests protecting the sanctity of their rites from violation by the profane.

My position is that the ways people connect with one another are of universal interest and concern, and ought not to be considered the exclusive domain of any one group of men (for example, theologians) or of any one mode of treatment (for example, storytelling). The moment a man employs institutional power to confront three delusional Christs with each other, in his presence, and without their prior knowledge, he has performed an action which is subject to the criteria of moral judgment no less than to those of scientific method.

It is quite possible to argue that this act (of an ethical nature not uncommon in contemporary psychological experiments) is justified because it purposes a greater good attainable by no other method. I would argue generally that such acts are not so justified, and I did argue specifically that they were not justified in Dr. Rokeach's case because he demonstrated in his story a lack of that self-knowledge necessary to anyone, especially to a scientist of the mind, who undertakes an operation of such delicacy. But any arguing on the subject presupposes the possibility of making moral assumptions shared by both parties to the argument. To maintain, even implicitly, that the actions of Dr. Rokeach during his experiment are exempt from moral criteria, because they were performed by a scientist in the discharge of his duties is intellectually inadmissible. It is to make a coffin of scientific method, pull the lid down on yourself, and lock it from the inside.

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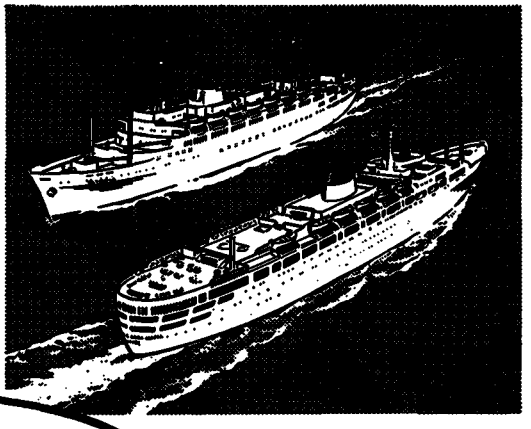

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Breakthrough?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Daiches, reviewing *Breakthrough: A Treasury of Contemporary American-Jewish Literature* [August], which I co-edited with Irving Malin, finds so much that is praiseworthy that it may seem ungracious to quarrel with his reservations. But because they go to the heart of our thesis, that something new and significant has occurred in American-Jewish writing. . . . I must . . . say a few words in self-defense.

Conceding that in the field of criticism "the achievement is evident and formidable," Mr. Daiches doubts that the same holds true for fiction and poetry. He is certainly correct in stressing the greater *éclat* which attaches to contemporary criticism. . . . It would be strange if in an "age of criticism" American-Jewish criticism should have proved an exception to the general rule. But . . . are we therefore to assume that American-Jewish fiction and poetry fail to share in what the editors have chosen to regard as a breakthrough?

Mr. Daiches bases his strictures largely on the evidence he discovers in the anthology, but he should know that to suggest the totality of a writer's work through representative samplings is difficult, if not impossible, especially when his most important achievements—the long story, the novelette, the novel—cannot be included. . . . The question is not whether the specific selections are themselves evidence of a breakthrough, but whether

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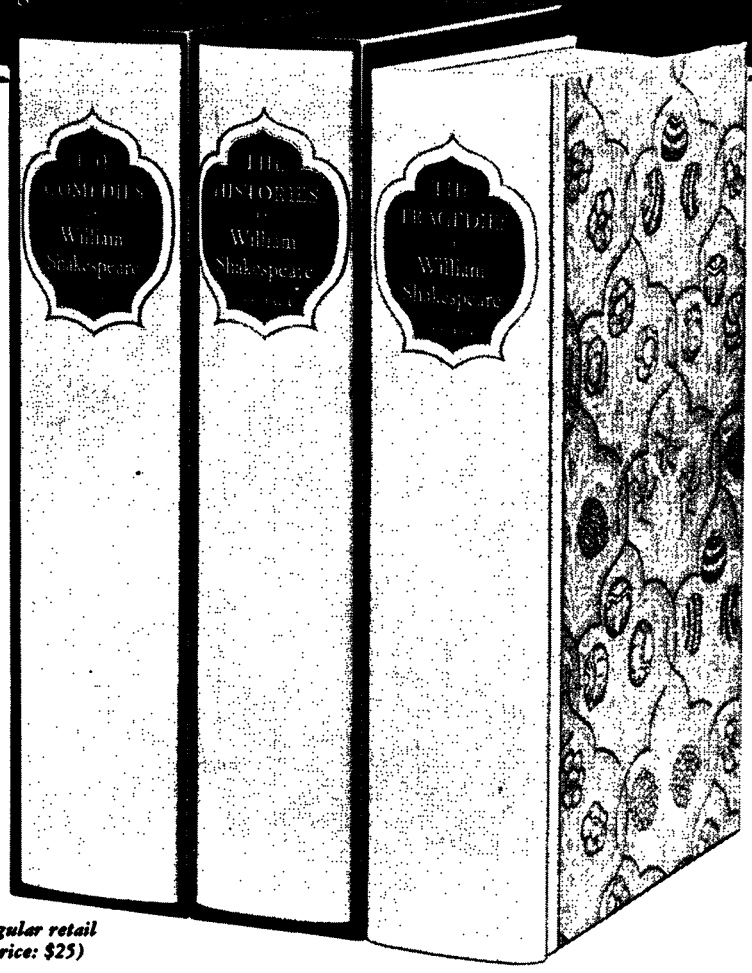

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"'It's a swell suite,' whispered Jordan respectfully . . .

"'Open another window,' commanded Daisy . . .

"'There aren't any more.'

"'Well, we'd better telephone for an axe—'"

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD
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they point to a larger body of achievement. . . .

To put the question negatively, does the work of Bellow, Malamud, Mailer, Roth, Herbert Gold, Ivan Gold, Grace Paley, Paul Goodman, and Wallace Markfield give no warrant for the assertion that something new and significant has occurred within the mainstream of American fiction and within the traditional currents of American-Jewish fiction? We pose the same question in behalf of those—Wallant, Adler, Friedman, Marcus, Swados, Stern, Harris, and others—for whom there was no room within . . . our anthology. The enormous impact of most of these writers on the serious reading public in America provides, we believe, an absolutely unequivocal answer. . . . The question of identity has been asked and answered, to quote Daiches, "in such a way as to illuminate both the Jewish and the general human situation. . . ." This is why American Jewish writers have been and deserve to be taken seriously. . . . How much of a breakthrough has been effected both in fiction and poetry becomes abundantly clear when we contrast the contemporary achievement with the achievement of the previous half-century here in America.

But, Daiches asks rhetorically, does all this "add up to a movement, a real comprehensive breakthrough into new art forms, higher literary achievement?" – implying that it does not. But the answer depends on what he means. If a considerable number of American-Jewish writers have been liberated to deal creatively with the human condition, as Daiches agrees they have, this does in our judgment constitute a movement. If several at least have produced works which, as distinct from the parochial works of the past, have entered the broader streams of American and world literature, this is, again in our judgment, a "higher" literary achievement. . . .

IRWIN STARK
Bronxville, New York

The Role of Social Workers

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of Edgar May's *The Wasted Americans* [July] Herbert Gans takes some familiar potshots at professional social workers . . . . "In the past," he writes, "[social workers] have often been unable to overcome their middle class orientation. . . . More professionals may thus result only in more professionalized punishment of the poor."

. . . Mr. Gans has every right not to like social workers, if he so chooses, but the fact is that thousands of settlement workers, workers in prisons, family agencies, public schools, and so on, deal daily with people who have problems of overwhelming complexity. They don't always succeed—yet often they alleviate at least a great many of them.

Can Mr. Gans suggest some non-middle-class orientation we are not using? We should be grateful.

And who, incidentally, does Mr. Gans think is responsible for the policy on the part of certain federal and local agencies of employing "sub-professionals of low income origins" . . . to "act as middlemen between the professionals and the poor"? . . .

HANS S. FALCK
Associate Professor
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

MR. GANS *writes:*

Although my personal feelings toward social workers are irrelevant, I like those who have a truly professional conception of their function, and are more concerned with improving their services than with defending either their monopoly or what Professor Falck admits is less than a perfect record of achievement. One of my favorites among them is Gertrude Goldberg, who has worked with trained low-income non-professionals in a successful homemaker program developed by Mobilization for Youth on New York's Lower East Side. In reporting on their approach and comparing it to that of the professionals, she writes:

> The reasons why homemakers develop rapport with clients could stem from their greater proximity to the client than the professional workers, or the job they do. . . . I sometimes feel like an inhibiting influence when I go along to introduce a homemaker to a client. When I leave, they break out into their own language . . . somehow, as if by magic, they converse freely and fully. . . .
>
> Empathy rather than sympathy comes more naturally to the homemaker than to the professional worker. . . . Although homemakers are in some respects less accepting than professional workers, they are perhaps more

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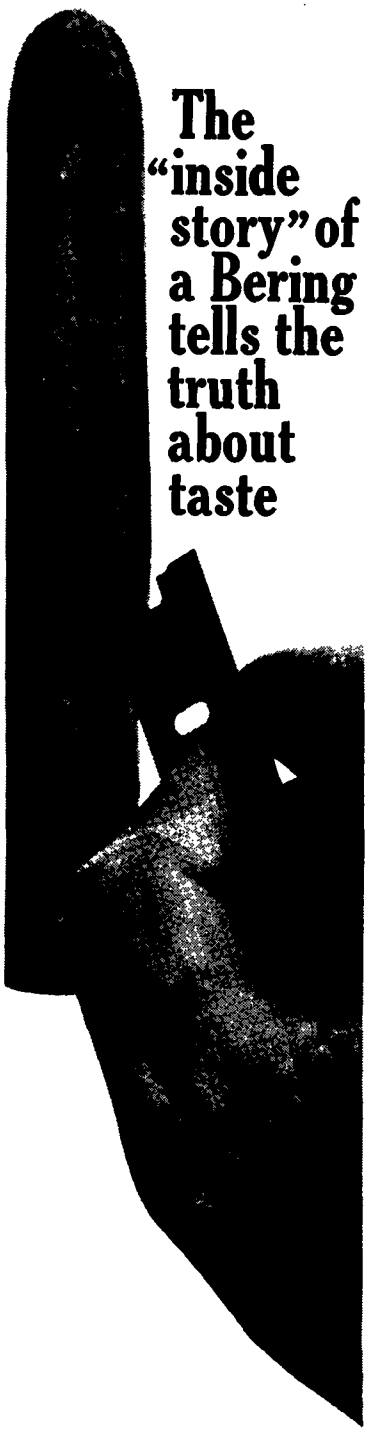

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tolerant in others. They don't perceive people as problems. They react more strongly to bad housing, illness, or lack of money because they know what it feels like to do without the necessities. . . .

Somehow Mrs. Smith was less forbidding to the homemaker than the caseworker, who was frightened of her. She was well meaning, easily misunderstood and temperamental, but she wasn't "paranoid, rejecting, abusive." Mrs. Casey was "a fine person who cared for her children" and that was the main thing even if she had four illegitimate children. To the social worker she was depressed, practically ego-less, "so self-destructive." . . . The homemakers aren't trained to perceive people as clients. . . .

Needless to say, there are many technical services which only professionals can carry out. When it comes to non-technical ones, however, many of them find it difficult—and understandably so—to set aside their own values, and hide their disapproval or fear of low-income clients by the thinly veiled hostility which I called professional punishment of the poor. The use of subprofessionals would not only make it unnecessary for middle-class professionals lacking empathetic skills to undertake this destructive and self-destructive function, but would also provide new jobs among a population so beset by unemployment.

Incidentally, Mrs. Goldberg's observations are quoted in a Mobilization for Youth report, *The Revolution in Social Work: The New Non-Professional,* by Frank Riessman, which has been quite influential in stimulating federal and local interest in the use of sub-professionals. Dr. Riessman is a psychologist.

Scholars & Scrolls

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . How amazed I was to find that Cecil Roth's "New Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls" [June] was but the reflection of shadows he has already cast in many journals since 1958. Because of the reported findings in Masada, Professor Roth now repeats his contention that the members of the Qumran sect (to be identified with the Masada defenders) are the *Sicarii*-Zealots. . . .

Professor Roth declares that his conclusion "arrived at by means of the usual historical reasoning, seems . . . inescapable." . . . But careful reading of Josephus will show that there was a vast difference between the *Sicarii* and the Zealots and hence these cannot be grouped together.

The *Sicarii* are to be identified with the "Fourth Philosophy" of Josephus. Thus we find in Antt. 18.1.6:

> But of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy, Judas the Galilean was the author [6 C.E.]. These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty; and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord. They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor indeed do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man Lord; . . . and it was in Gessius Florus's time [64-66] that the nation began to grow mad with this distemper, who was our procurator, and who occasioned the Jews to go wild with it by the abuse of his authority and to make them revolt from the Romans.

Menahem, who was the son of Judas, carried on the "philosophy" which was basically political; in all other matters and observances the *Sicarii* held the same notions as the Pharisees, except in their political philosophy of "no lordship of man over man."

In view of this, it is most peculiar of Dr. Roth to declare that the Masada liturgy (yet unpublished) follows the "heretical" calendar of the Qumran sect. During the Second Temple period the calendar determined Jewish observance and practice. The holidays and Temple service were dependent upon the exact date of the calendar in vogue among the spiritual leaders, the Pharisees.

If the "*Sicarii*-Zealots" agreed with the Pharisees in *all* religious matters, as Josephus notes, except in political perspective, how could they follow an "heretical" calendar?

As extremists since 6 C.E., the *Sicarii* used terroristic methods to carry out their political philosophy. When the Revolt began, and their leader Menahem was killed, they fled to Masada, remaining there till 73 C.E. Josephus does not mention the activity of the *Sicarii* as participants in the war at all.

On the other hand, the Zealots came into being at the beginning

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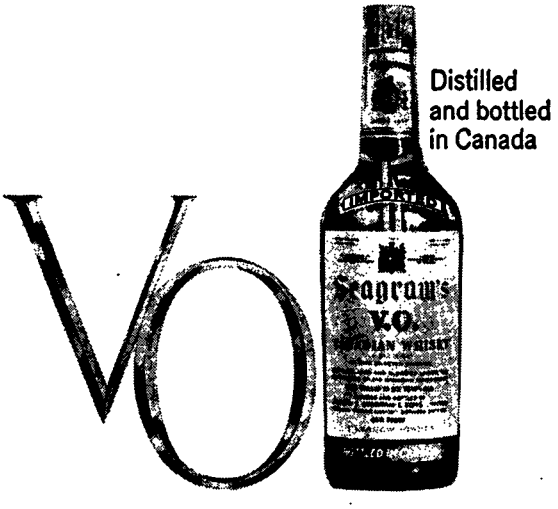

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You'll know him by his smart-aleck tone—by his delivering positive verdicts on matters that are plainly open to doubt. Don't be his easy mark.

Test Your Resisting-Power Against These Seven Actual Cases!

The Storm, Cot

1. "For all the signposts such as billowing drapery and bodily attitudes pointing out that the figures are supposed to be running, there is no expression of flight. The lovers remain forever on tiptoe."

—A typically arrogant wise-guyism intended to make you realize what an ignoramus you are compared to a "truly artistic person". Don't fall for it. It's a fake. To the vast majority of people the effect of "running" is very well conveyed here, as shown by actual experiment.

Van der Goes

2. "He leans forward in amazement; his face is filled with joy and reverence and almost with fright. He dares lean no closer, but his eyes start with wild curiosity as he strains forward. No head in the history of painting, of any period, surpasses this one in psychological revelation, through explicitly realistic representation."

—It's fifty years since anybody has taken seriously this myth about faces revealing character, as both your police department and the encyclopedia will tell you. And yet here's an "authority" concocting a purely personal "reading" of a man's character as though it were inevitable and then using it to justify an extravagant verdict.

Boom Town, Benton

4. "The artificiality of his style seems out of key with the folksiness of his subject, leaving us with the feeling that although he wanted to get to the heart of his material, he managed only to observe it from the outside and record it inappropriately."

Laocoon

5. "We are amazed — but we are not moved . . . . The Laocoon will always be a popular work, but it will never tell anybody anything much about the human spirit."

The above two comments illustrate one of the "wise guy's" favorite tricks for luring you into positivism — namely by using certain portentous-sounding descriptive terms as though — having done so — anybody with at least the brains of an infant would know exactly what conclusions of goodness or badness to draw therefrom. It's as narrow (and out-of-date) as were the descriptive terms ("decadent", "meretricious", "insane", "chaotic", "corrupt" etc.) by which critics (fifty years ago) attempted to vilify Cézanne, Picasso, Matisse and other artists who failed to conform to the accepted rules of the day. Hundreds of famous artists employ "artificial styles", "record inappropriately" and "observe only from the outside" — and do it intentionally. As many others would strongly resent any obligation to "tell anybody anything about the human spirit" — not because there was necessarily anything "wrong" about it, but because it would soon give art a single-track, pedantic flavor — as monotonous and self-defeating as would an obligation to impart a "moral lesson". To exclude any flavors as invariably "bad" and adopt others as invariably "good" merely impoverishes art. It's as futile as endeavoring to appraise ice cream on the basis of its being a "frigid, soggy substance with the crispness of a wet sponge."

Queen Christina, Holbein

6. "If the figure were truly centered it would relay to us the impression of a much more foursquare, more obvious, more everyday woman."

—In certain psychological tests conducted among college students by their professors not a single student out of the hundred and ninety who took the tests reacted in the manner predicted. Most reputable institutions feel an obligation to verify positive statements of this sort. Failure to do so simply indicates how sure they are of your being too thoroughly subjugated (or stupid) to investigate for yourself.

The Duke

3. . ."one of the extraordinary portraits of any time, a supreme example of the revelation of personality in spite of seemingly insuperable difficulties. . . . Piero took the ruined profile, the coarse hair, even the warts on the face, and patterned them into a design revealing the strength, decision, intelligence and abstract beauty—for, as drawn by Piero, the line of the duke's profile has become abstractly beautiful — of one of the most compelling personalities of the age. . . . A landscape can enhance the mood of a picture; the role of the serene background behind Federigo (the duke) becomes clear if we imagine his profile played against a stormy scene: our previous impression of the great clarity and decision of his intellect would be much changed."

—If anything, this is even sillier than the comment about the Van der Goes. Place the duke against a stormy (instead of serene) background and the "great clarity of his intellect might seem (to dupes of character-revelation, that is) all the more evident from his being able to retain it under such circumstances. And as for the equally absurd assertion about the line of the duke's profile being "abstractly beautiful," you have only to remember John Sloan's shrewd remark: "who ever heard of a musician's being passionately fond of B-flat."

A GREAT PRESTIGE ABUSED

Bear in mind that the seven statements quoted here are not from chatty articles in minor newspapers but from an elaborate 24-volume work published by one of America's greatest art institutions and widely advertised as a sound education in art. Nor are they isolated cases either — but a few from an innumerable number of others just as irresponsible.

However, their wrongness — though bad enough in itself — does less harm than the fact that those who take them seriously, when they find themselves completely unable to see what so supposedly great an authority tells them they ought to see, conclude that there is something wrong with themselves and that they will therefore never understand art. It's not so. Actually what's happened is that they have been made victims of an ancient superstition (that art is immortal) inherited from the witch doctor (or Salem) era and kept alive because certain influential insiders derive financial and social benefits therefrom.

But perhaps most shocking of all is the spectacle of the academic world (presumably peopled by ardent advocates of *the careful statement made only after thorough scrutiny*) standing numbly by while these intellectual atrocities are enunciated, instead of denouncing them with the jeers and derision they deserve.

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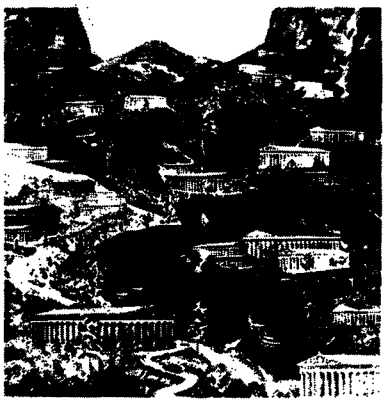
The Stork Cartoon

It's the accident of what men possessing what talents arrive on earth, in what quantities and at what times, that usually decides which art works are considered "great," and not the qualities in the art works themselves. A sudden surge of 'Type A" men, all possessing a special skill in creating (or in understanding) Type A art, will soon reduce that type of art to mediocrity no matter how superior it had previously been considered.

Conjecturism avoids this mistake simply by refusing to be positive. It accepts (rather than conceals) what are indubitable facts and then makes the best conjectures it can under the circumstances. It brings art up-to-date much as evolution brought Biology up-to-date — namely by abandoning the rigid certitude and turning towards the experienced but temporary Conjecture. In the moment that man attempts the eternal verdict in art, he defeats his own purpose as certainly as would the meteorologist who ventured beyond the immediate probabilities in his forecasting of the weather It just can't be done without stepping openly into Mumbo-Jumbo.



Too Many Parthenons!

As soon as you admit that an art work can continue being "immortal" only if *certain things don't happen*, you are admitting, in effect, that it is not really immortal at all.

Bellelli Family

7. "Superlatives are dangerous, but there is less danger than usual in describing The Bellelli Family as the finest psychological group portrait ever painted. The temperament of each of the four members is individualized for us, and, beyond that, their interrelationship is revealed . . . He (the father) is the only one of the family who is not completely revealed to us as a person. He has a life beyond this room; perhaps he leads a life more important to him than the life we are seeing here; he is an outsider. But this vagueness, incompleteness and isolation are reversed in the figure of the wife. She stands with dignity, decision and forbearance, dominating the room by her quietness. . . . She (the daughter at right) sits restlessly, one leg tucked up under her, as if impatient with sitting for her artist cousin, unable to remain still, the volatile member of the group."

A pipe-dream of this sort has about as much validity for the appraising of an art work as would something that came from reading tea-leaves. If a hundred sensible men could be persuaded (and it wouldn't be easy) to make the best guesses they could as to the "interrelationships" of the four members of this family, the chances that a single guess would even approximate the one here so confidently proclaimed would be negligible. If you wonder why the public remains so lamentably ignorant of art it's because preposterous nonsense like this is being dispensed to it as "education". A change is long overdue. Conjecturism provides it. It costs nothing to investigate. Just use free coupon.

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How to Conjecture Art and not be a Wise-Guy

The Gag about Art Being Immortal

Although the two pamphlets are valuable in themselves, they can serve only as introduction to so far-reaching a subject. For further reading (on the same free-trial terms) we suggest the two conjecturist books mentioned below.

Authoritative Opinions

"HYPOCRISY ABOUT ART lets a lot of fresh air into the subject of art criticism — the nit wit babble of the avant garde has no relevance nor importance in understanding art and the book does a good job of deflating some of the pompous nonsense." George B. Keester, Chairman Fine Arts Dept., West Virginia Wesleyan College.

"Shaw has taken off the lid and exposed the aesthetic and critical overalls in the stew of beauty. Painter, art gallery director, and aesthetician for many years, Shaw has shown many opinions and their underlying presuppositions to lie in a Limpopo greasiness. At the heart of Shaw's theory of aesthetic judgment is his Theory of Boredom. Here he gives us a positive boost in 'Estimating Speeds of Tiring.' His chapter entitled 'The Metropolitan Museum Lays an Egg' is far too delicious to miss. A warning to aestheticians is that they may not like everything they read in Shaw, but certainly there is much to appeal to any catholic taste. After the initial shock and its ensuing brief hysteria, further perusal and thought will lead the reader rudely on to an awakening not unlike the experience of satori. This was a long overdue cleaning of the fat, self-congratulatory, aesthetic stables." Prof. Dale Riepe, C. W. Post College, in Philosophy & Phenom. Research.

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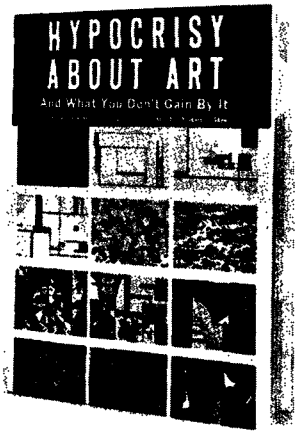
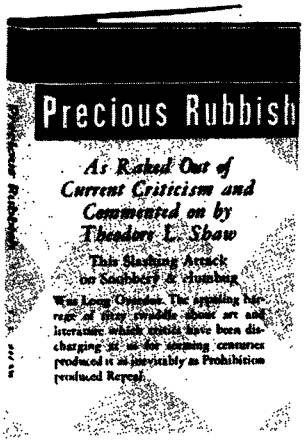
"I loved it — gave three critics one copy each — they loved it. Lost is he who hath no humor." — Dr. Wm. K. Keller, Prof. of Psychiatry, Univ. of Louisville.

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of the war and were active throughout, seeking to upset the provisional government and aristocratic peace party. Their political philosophy was one of democratic rule. When Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple burnt, their hopes came to an end; there was no *raison d'être* for their existence and they disappeared as a party. Hence to combine the Zealots with the *Sicarii* in time and place is far from historic truth.

Even more amazing are Professor Roth's chronology and dates. He asserts that Menahem was killed on Yom Kippur. What is his source? He derives it from B.J. 2. 17.8 which notes that the attack on Menahem took place shortly after the sixth of Gorpiaeus.

The general opinion of historians is that the Syro-Macedonian names of the months are used to represent Jewish months in Josephus's B.J. Gorpiaeus represents Elul. Others believe that the months used by Josephus represent the Julian calendar proper in which Gorpiaeus corresponds to September.

Professor Zeitlin has shown that the months in BJ were not Jewish months but the months of Tyre. The sixth of Gorpiaeus (twenty-fourth of September) in 65 C.E. was the third of Tishri.

The question therefore is, if the attack on Menahem took place shortly after the sixth of Gorpiaeus, when was it?

If we follow Zeitlin's view, in 65 C.E. the sixth of Gorpiaeus was the third of Tishri, but in 66 C.E. it was the fourteenth of Tishri. If Menahem was slain a few days later, the event is to be placed in the middle of the Festival of Succoth.

Professor Dupont-Sommer (*Evidences*, March 1958 [*9e an No. 70, revue publiée sous l'égide de l'American Jewish Committee*], p. 19) has already shown that Roth accepts Zeitlin's view that the sixth of Gorpiaeus is the third of Tishri, but that Zeitlin believes that the revolt broke out in 65 whereas others maintain it was in 66. Roth notes emphatically "the revolt against Rome which began in 66." As such, the sixth of Gorpiaeus was then the fourteenth of Tishri and a few days later would be the middle of Succoth—and therefore not on Yom Kippur.

From any scholarly viewpoint, Professor Roth has erred considerably, even as A. Dupont-Sommer has noted: "*on est loin du jour de Kippour.*" Professor Roth also notes that the massacre was on Sabbath-Yom Kippur. Neither in 65 or 66 did Yom Kippur occur on the Sabbath.

Referring to Dr. Zeitlin (though not by name), Roth states that "an American scholar . . . stoutly maintains . . . that the Scrolls are medieval forgeries." That such should be repeated by him and others is incredible, for Dr. Zeitlin specifically wrote, in *JQR*, 1959 p. 226, in answer to Professor Roth: "I have never said that the Scrolls were forgeries. What I maintain is that they were composed during the Middle Ages."

It should be clarified to all that the "hoax" or "forgeries" does not refer to anything perpetrated by the medieval writers. The terms apply to the modern majority interpretation, asserts Zeitlin, since modern scholars in their contention that the Scrolls are of the intertestamental period have thereby perpetrated a "hoax" and a "forgery" upon the public.

Professor Roth . . . cites as new evidence the liturgy, hymns, and calendar. As long as photostats have not been published and we cannot examine the paleography and terminology, no judgment can be reached on this. Proof can come from internal evidence—the *plene* mode of writing, the method of crossing out words and the use of phrases like *talmud, bet mishpat, brit*, etc.—all of which are very late.

One is therefore astonished at Professor Roth's "scholarly technique" in identifying the Scrolls with the "*Sicarii*-Zealots." Has the dating of these Masada Scrolls been confirmed by the carbon-14 test? Have unbiased scholars examined the full text of any available photostats released? No historian can express an opinion or reach a "conclusion" until all evidence is before him.

(DR.) SIDNEY B. HOENIG
Professor of Jewish History
Yeshiva University
New York City

MR. ROTH *writes:*

The remarks of Professor Zeitlin's faithful disciple, Professor Sidney B. Hoenig, are surely better suited for a "learned" publication than for the pages of COMMENTARY. I will say only, briefly:

(1) My proposals do not depend on the identity of the *Sicarii* with the Zealots, which I have not proposed. But if the bodies were not cognate, why are the two terms used

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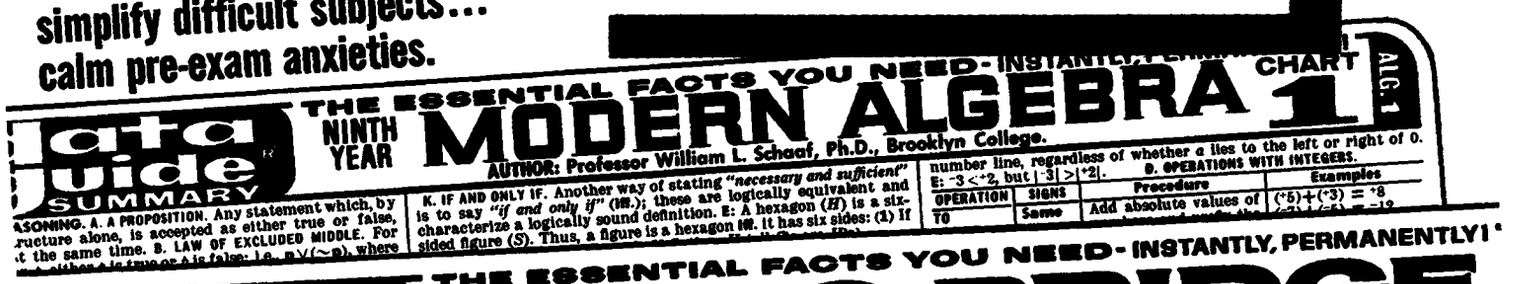
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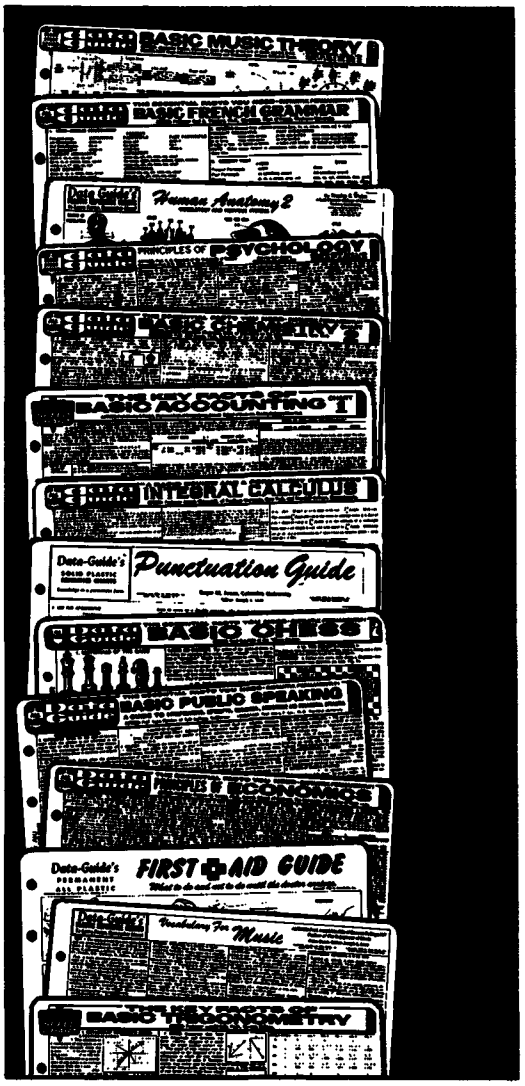

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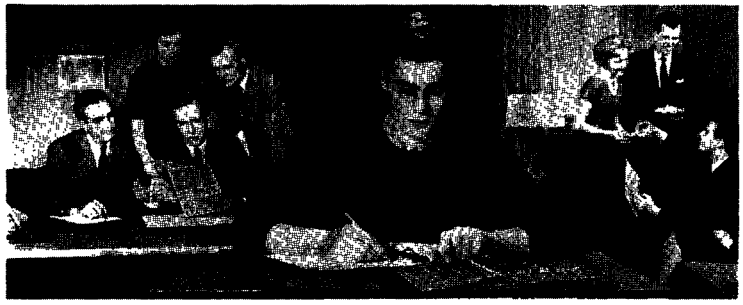

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interchangeably in contemporary sources?

(2) No serious scholar can accept the opinions of that abominable quisling apologist Josephus, even though we are compelled to rely on him for facts.

(3) I have never stated that Menahem, the *Sicarii* leader, was assassinated on the "orthodox" Day of Atonement, but only about that time: my authority is Professor Zeitlin.

(4) In my innocence, I assume that Professor Yadin tells the truth, even if what he says is not yet substantiated by infra-red photographs and carbon-14 tests.

(5) Finally, I wish that Professor Hoenig would explain by what miracle medieval documents—forged or no—found their way under the ruins of a building destroyed in 73 C.E.

Men & Machines

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ben B. Seligman's article, "Automation and the State" [June] is a concise summary of the problem of structural unemployment caused by the automation of the mechanical processes hereto accomplished by unskilled workers. However, this problem has nothing to do with the genealogy of the ENIAC family.... The automation of logical processes via computers is bringing about a host of moral, ethical, and financial questions which ought to be widely discussed. But it is unfortunate that this newer development is used in a sensational way to introduce a much older, unrelated problem.

STEVEN J. FENVES
Champaign, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Ben B. Seligman's article on automation with more than the general interest of the average reader. Not that I am an economist—merely an economizer for the last several months since having been bumped off my job. It surprises me that Mr. Seligman does not even suggest what I believe would be the most effective counterforce against the ravages of this latest moloch of industrial progress: commensurate reduction of working hours with increased production resulting from labor-saving processes. Retraining of workers and relocation of industries are at best stopgap measures.... Under the prevailing system, automation . . .

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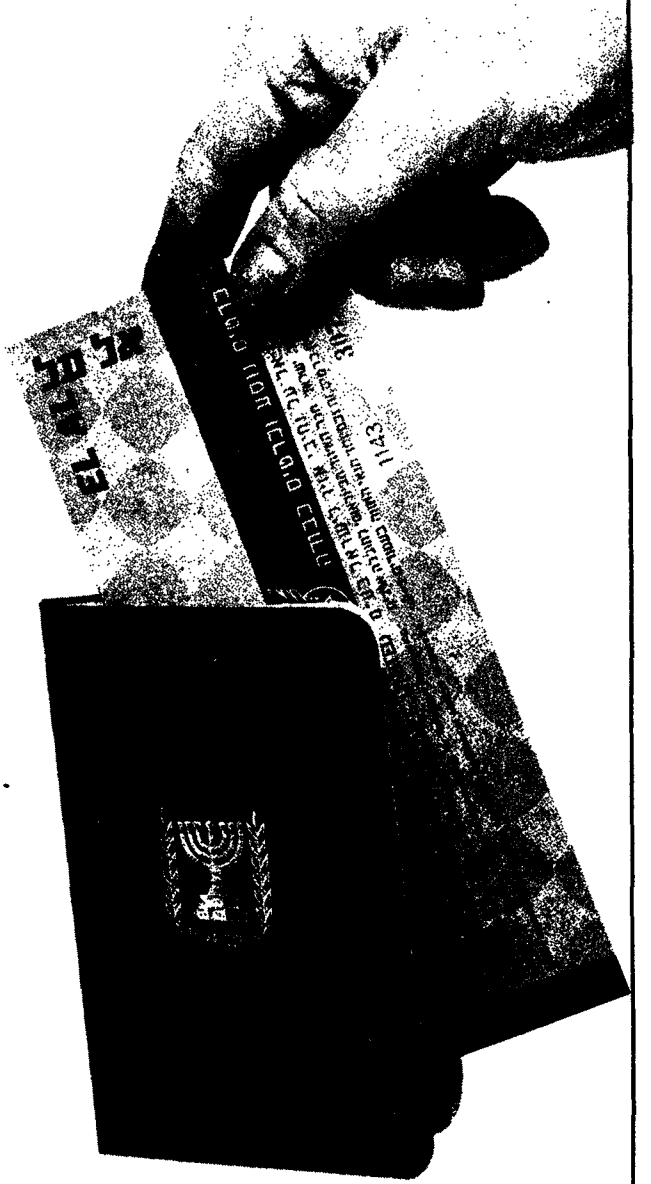

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renders the copious fruits of its cornucopia only more unattainable to a growing mass of job-seekers in a constantly increasing population.

J. S. OESTREICHER
Bronx, New York

MR. SELIGMAN *writes*:

I am rather puzzled by Mr. Fenves's objections, for I hadn't known that digital computers were restricted solely to the handling of "logical processes," by which I take it he refers to the many experiments in artificial intelligence. One might ask Mr. Fenves what sort of computer it is that applies numerical controls to a huge turret lathe or drill press? And what of the digital machines employed to guide petrochemical operations (I know, analogs are also used), continuous casting in steel, the assembly line in autos, the bread in baking, the meat in abattoirs, the checks in banking, and the ciphers in a ledger? Does Mr. Fenves suggest that the hardware engaged in these tasks have no relation to ENIAC? Well, if he does think so, all I can say is that he has no sense of history and even less of a sense of technology. Another point—Mr. Fenves implies that only unskilled workers are affected by automation. I don't know what Mr. Oestreicher does, or why he has been forced to "economize," but it's an even bet that the latter could tell Mr. Fenves a few things about the contemporary scene. I hadn't known that machinists, steel-workers, auto-assemblers, bakers, meat-packers, bank tellers and bookkeepers were all unskilled workers. Perhaps Mr. Fenves would care to advise the several thousand engineers who have lost their jobs in the last eighteen to twenty-four months because of automation that they, too, are unskilled. Mr. Oestreicher's point is well taken, but I had already discussed the shorter work week in an earlier article ("Man, Work, and the Automated Feast," COMMENTARY, July 1962) and did not want to repeat myself.

The Crisis of Faith

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It appears as though the attempt of Emil L. Fackenheim to de-eclipse God has eclipsed man ["The Eclipse of God," June].

In positing the tautology that only he who believes is a believer, we have a *reductio ad absurdum*. Beyond the veil of philosophic obscurantism lies the verity that one who is open to faith, by dint of having been thus inculcated, will certainly agree that he stands in a direct relationship with his God.

The notion that catastrophes test but don't destroy faith is equally strange. Mr. Fackenheim seems to ignore contemporary man-centered ideologies which demand self-justification by God as they do of man, for God, too, must be a "success."

. . . Professor Fackenheim's article illustrates the deficiency of philosophical theology. Perhaps philosophers and theologians should enter the 20th century.

(RABBI) M. J. SUMMER
Buffalo, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In the ranks of both the godly enduring His eclipse, and those men who see only the darkness at large, one finds beings who want to do good in this world. Both sorts plainly agree about the goodness of many actions. Both find men who do not seem to care, and the potentiality for organized monstrousness, in their own ranks. Thus, for many, the discovery of goodness has become more important than the argument about God. . . . The power behind the subjectivism so beautifully described in Mr. Fackenheim's article was the rediscovery that belief in God was not necessary to enable one to do good. . . .

The painful 20th-century quest for an existential politics which meets human needs is at root a dialogue about goodness. It is neither necessarily godly nor necessarily ungodly. . . . Honest subjectivists escape the agony of life no more than honest men of faith. . . .

MICHAEL W. VOZICK
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Emil L. Fackenheim mistakenly attributes the eclipse of God and the contemporary crisis of religious faith to pervasive subjectivist reductionism. . . .

The elaboration of science has explained many causes and effects and has reduced the mysteries of life and the universe. Consequently, it has reduced the need to explain phenomena by deriving them from the workings of an inscrutable God, who is creator and prime mover. . . .

The relativism of morals, mores, and religious belief that derives from the development of anthro-

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pology, social psychology, and comparative religion; philosophies that challenge any proof of God's existence and logical positivism that classifies moral and religious statements as being emotive only and as saying nothing objective about reality—these are not friendly to certainty nor to belief itself. . . .

These many elements made doubt an increasing phenomenon, and faith is most secure when it is undisturbed by doubt.

The *coup de grâce* was supplied by the tragedies of the 20th century: Nazism, Stalinism, two world wars, the Bomb. The tragedies were the more important because they followed upon increasing control by man of his environment, upon increasing freedom and belief in man's perfectibility, and upon the promise of a better collective and individual life.

WILLIAM LUCY

Utica, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It is in connection with his critique of subjectivism that the difficulties of Mr. Fackenheim's encounter theology are most in evidence. . . . Mr. Fackenheim refers to a "primordial openness," and an "immediate relationship" to God. But it is not at all clear how this appeal to religious experience can refute subjectivism. Either that experience is self-authenticating, or it is not. If it is (as Mr. Fackenheim seems to suggest), this can only be because "having a religious experience" *means* "having a direct experience of God." But if, as C. B. Martin, a contemporary "subjectivist" points out, *only* my experience is relevant to the truth of the affirmation, "I have a direct experience of God," I am talking only about that experience; whether anything is apprehended *in* that experience cannot be read off from the experience alone, and my psychological claim gains its immunity from error only at the cost of saying nothing whatever about a being outside of myself. If, however, my experience may be delusive (as Mr. Fackenheim also seems to admit), this can only be because I have *separated* the psychological and the existential claim: God was not the cause of my experience, his presence not the object of that experience. In this case, my affirmation is presumably exposed to the vicissitudes that face all factual propositions . . . (evidence, confirmation, etc.). In short, the dilemma confronting an encounter theology is as follows: If my religious claim is construed as incorrigible, it is necessarily subjective. And equivalently, if its subjectivity is denied because it implies an existential reference, then it is corrigible, i.e., establishes an inference. Mr. Fackenheim, it would seem, wishes to affirm both antecedents while denying the consequents. Indeed it appears in the end that the final judge of the truth of a credal affirmation is the person making it. But how is this view compatible with the existential claim, one which Mr. Fackenheim, moreover, believes may be confirmed? Is it on the other hand possible that the truth may remain forever concealed? And isn't this the most dangerous kind of subjectivism? . . .

ROBERT ROSTHAL

University of North Carolina
Greensboro, North Carolina

MR. FACKENHEIM *writes*:

I fully agree with Mr. Vozick's view that the "quest for an existential politics," if realistically engaged in with a view to idealistic ends, will bring both the "godly" and the "ungodly" face to face with "the agony of life." I would insist, though, that in this quest, the honest believer has a source of strength unavailable to the honest agnostic.

Mr. Lucy has not, I fear, read my article carefully. It attacks such philosophies as logical positivism, on the ground that they dogmatically presuppose what they pretend to prove, namely, subjectivist reductionism. Mr. Lucy has not met this criticism but simply restated the dogmas, as if no criticism had been made. His view that religion seeks to explain the unknown has been popular among positivists since Comte, for it discredits religion. But it would be accepted by few genuine scholars of religion whose purpose is to understand, not to discredit. Thus the Jewish creation story is no "theory of cosmic origins," nor does the Book of Job offer an "explanation of evil." Both leave their respective "problem" as unexplained as they find it. The purpose of both stories is to struggle for a relation with God, not to give pre-scientific explanations of the universe.

It is hard for me to believe that Rabbi Summer's comments are meant seriously. What could raise man to greater dignity than a relation with God? How could the Jewish faith—if capable of being

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destroyed by catastrophes, not merely tested—have survived for but a single century? And as for the demand issued by "man-centered ideologies" that God be a "success" (ideologies which, incidentally, I did not ignore), what on earth can be meant by such a demand except, possibly, a return to primitive magic?

As to Mr. Rosthal's rather substantial letter:

(1) Biblical faith clearly takes empirical evidence as confirming God but not counting against Him. The prayed-for rain evidences God's presence; lack of rain only shows that the prayer is denied. God speaks through the true prophet; the false prophet shows only that He has not spoken, not that He cannot speak. I have admitted and, indeed insisted that such "confirmation" differs from, say, scientific confirmation. Mr. Rosthal's difficulties arise because this difference is ignored.

(2) Mr. Rosthal attributes to me the attempt to "refute subjectivism" by "an appeal to religious experience." My clearly stated intentions were confined to refuting the claims of subjectivism to be a refutation of faith, accompanied by the open admission and insistence that faith itself is undemonstrable. Why has so keen a critic failed to notice this? I suggest because of a tendency common among linguistic philosophers (their Wittgenstein-inspired respect for "ordinary language" notwithstanding) to understand the claims of faith in extraneous categories,—categories which I would argue to be inapplicable.

(3) Modern faith *is* faced with a dilemma, but not with Mr. Rosthal's. His is between unfalsifiable but psychologically subjective data, and such as are objective at the price of being falsifiable. The believer's dilemma is that his faith is "subjective" as regards *certainty* (for he has no Archimedian point outside faith itself) and yet "objective" as regards the *truth* intended (his faith is true at all only if he stands before God, not if he is in solitary disport with god-images). That such a faith entails risk has always been recognized. Because of modern subjectivist reductionism, the recognition today is radical. And modern believers such as Kierkegaard know that they can cope with the risk and the dilemma only by their willingness to stake their lives on an "objectively uncertain" truth.

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NEGROES & JEWS: THE NEW CHALLENGE TO PLURALISM

NATHAN GLAZER

IF TODAY one re-reads the article by Kenneth Clark on Negro-Jewish relations that was published in COMMENTARY almost nineteen years ago,* one will discover that tension between Negroes and Jews is neither of recent origin nor a product of the civil rights revolution. In that article Dr. Clark described the bitter feelings of the masses of Northern Negroes toward Jews. Not that these feelings hampered cooperation between Negro and Jewish leaders —an effective cooperation which was to play an important role in the following years in bringing fair-employment, fair-housing, and fair-education legislation to many communities, and indeed to most of the large Northern and Western states. But whatever the relationships were at the top, the fact was that down below, the Negro's experience of the Jew was not as a co-worker or friend or ally, but, in a word, as an exploiter.

As Dr. Clark wrote: "Some Negro domestics assert that Jewish housewives who employ them are unreasonably and brazenly exploitative. A Negro actor states in bitters terms that he is being flagrantly underpaid by a Jewish producer. A Negro entertainer is antagonistic to his Jewish agent, who, he is convinced, is exploiting him. . . . Antagonism to the 'Jewish landlord' is so common as to become almost an integral part of the folk culture of the Northern urban Negro." And, of course, one would have to add to this catalogue the Jewish merchants in the Negro business districts, believed by their customers to be selling them inferior goods at high prices and on poor credit terms (a charge the merchants might answer by explaining that they were simply covering the greater financial costs—through payment delinquency and robbery—of doing business in a Negro area, plus compensation for the physical danger involved).

NATHAN GLAZER, a regular contributor and a former member of the COMMENTARY editorial staff, is now professor of sociology at the University of California at Berkeley. A leading student of ethnicity in American life, Mr. Glazer is one of the authors (with David Riesman and Reuel Denney) of *The Lonely Crowd*. His other works include *Beyond the Melting Pot* (written in collaboration with Daniel Patrick Moynihan), *American Judaism*, and *The Social Basis of American Communism*.

In any case, long before many of those Negro youths were born who took part last summer in the destruction and looting of Jewish businesses in Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant and Philadelphia, Dr. Clark explained clearly enough the basis for the anti-Semitism prevalent in the Negro ghettos. It was, he said, a special variant of anti-white feeling, encouraged by the more direct and immediate contact that Negroes had with Jews than with other whites, and encouraged as well by the inferior position of Jews in American society, which permitted the Negro to find in the luxury of anti-Jewishness one of his few means of identifying with the American majority. Two years later, also in COMMENTARY, the young James Baldwin told the same story in one of his first published articles,† underlining the point with his elegant acidity: "But just as a society must have a scapegoat, so hatred must have a symbol. Georgia has the Negro and Harlem has the Jew." One still feels the shock of that cold ending: is *that* what the Jew was to Harlem in 1948?

If, however, we knew decades ago that the ironic historic confrontation of Jew (as landlord, merchant, housewife, businessman) with Negro (as tenant, customer, servant, and worker) in the North had produced hatred on the part of many poor and uneducated Negroes, we now have to record two new developments in this confrontation. First, the well of ill-feeling has moved upward to include a substantial part of the Negro leadership, mainly some of the newer leaders thrown up in the North by the civil rights revolution; and second, Jewish feeling toward the Negro has undergone changes of its own.

There is little question that this feeling has never been hatred. It has ranged from passionate advocacy of Negro rights by Jewish liberals (and Communists and Socialists too), through friendly cooperation on the part of Jewish leaders who saw Negroes as allies in the fight for common goals, to a less effective but fairly widespread good will on the part of ordinary Jews. The hatred of poor Negroes for Jews was not reciprocated by Jews; in the way that Harlem "needed" the Jew, the Lower East Side, Brownsville, and Flatbush per-

* "Candor on Negro-Jewish Relations," February 1946.
† "The Harlem Ghetto: Winter 1948," February 1948.

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haps needed the *goy*, but they never needed the Negro. If there was prejudice against Negroes (and, of course, there was), it was part of the standard Jewish ethnocentrism which excluded all outsiders. The businesslike adoption of the norms of behavior of the white world (in refusing to rent to Negroes in New York, or serve them in department stores in the South) was just that—businesslike rather than the reflection of a deeply held prejudice. The Irish had had experiences which had taught many of them to dislike or hate Negroes: their competition with Negroes for the worst jobs in the early days of immigration, their antagonism to a Civil War draft that forced them to fight—as they thought—for Negroes. But the Jews had never come into direct competition with Negroes, in North or South. The tenant or customer might hate the landlord or storekeeper—the feeling was not mutual.

In the North, then, in the late 40's and 50's, well-staffed and well-financed Jewish organizations usually had the support of much more poorly staffed and poorly financed Negro organizations in fighting for legislation that advanced the interests of both groups, even though they stood on very different steps in the economic and occupational ladder. For the same law permitted a Jew to challenge exclusion from a Fifth Avenue cooperative apartment and a Negro to challenge exclusion from a much more modest apartment building.

THIS SITUATION is now changing. As the Negro masses have become more active and more militant in their own interests, their feelings have become more relevant, and have forced themselves to the surface; and Jewish leaders—of unions, of defense and civil rights organizations—as well as businessmen, housewives, and home-owners, have been confronted for the first time with demands from Negro organizations that, they find, cannot serve as the basis of a common effort. The new developments feed each other, and it would be impossible to say which came first. The resistance of Jewish organizations and individual Jews to such demands as preferential union membership and preferential hiring, and to the insistence on the primacy of integration over all other educational objectives, breeds antagonism among former Negro allies. The "white liberal," who is attacked as a false friend unwilling to support demands which affect him or his, and as probably prejudiced to boot, is generally (even if this is not spelled out) the white *Jewish* liberal—and it could hardly be otherwise, in view of the predominance of Jews among liberals, particularly in major cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. This Jewish resistance, however, is often based not only on the demands themselves, but on a growing awareness of the depths of Negro antagonism to the world that Jewish liberalism considers desirable.

One important new element in the situation, then, is that the feelings of the Negro masses have become politically relevant and meaningful in a way that they were not in 1935 or 1943. In those years, too, the Negroes of Harlem rioted, and broke the show windows of the Jewish-owned stores, and looted their contents. But these earlier outbreaks—which in terms of the feelings involved were very similar to the outbreaks of last summer—were not tied up with a great civil rights movement. While the Negro leaders of today could deny all responsibility for such outbreaks, and could point out that this kind of hoodlumism had been endemic in the Negro ghettos since the depression, the growing tendency toward militancy in the civil rights movement meant that the leadership would inevitably be charged with responsibility—as they were not in 1935 and 1943 (except for Communists and race radicals). Moreover, the feelings of the Negro masses were now in greater measure *shared* by middle-class and white-collar and leadership groups. And this is also strikingly new.

For the Negro no longer confronts the Jew only as tenant, servant, customer, worker. The rise of Negro teachers, social workers, and civil servants in considerable numbers means another kind of confrontation. Once again, the accidents of history have put the Jew just ahead of the Negro, and just above him. Now the Negro teacher works under a Jewish principal, the Negro social worker under a Jewish supervisor. When HARYOU issued its huge report, *Youth in the Ghetto*, last summer, only one of some 800 school principals in the New York system was a Negro, and only four of the 1,200 top-level administrative positions in the system were filled by Negroes! But as significant as these ridiculously tiny percentages is the fact that most of the *other* principalships and administrative positions are filled by Jews who poured into the educational system during the 30's and are now well advanced within it, while thousands of Negroes, comparative latecomers, have inferior jobs. And what makes the situation even worse is that part of the blame for the poor education of Negro children can be placed on this white (but concretely Jewish) dominance. As the HARYOU report states (though indicating that this is only one possible point of view):

> Public school teachers in New York City come largely from the city colleges, which have a dominant pupil population from a culture which prepares the child from birth for competition of a most strenuous type. These students are largely white, middle-class, growing up in segregated white communities where, by and large, their only contact with the Negro finds him in positions of servitude. . . . Responsible positions, even within the neighborhood schools, are in the main held by people who perceivably differ from [the Negro pupils]. The dearth of Negro princi-

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pals, assistants and supervisors is a most glaring deficit and one which leaves a marked, unwholesome effect upon the child's self-image. . . .The competitive culture from which the bulk of the teachers come, with the attendant arrogance of intellectual superiority of its members, lends itself readily to the class system within the school . . . which in effect perpetuates the academic pre-eminence of the dominant group.

This new confrontation of middle-class Negroes, recently arrived at professional status, and middle-class Jews, who got there earlier and hold the superior positions, is most marked in New York, because of its huge Jewish population. It is there that the animus against the white liberal reaches its peak, and where the white liberal tends most often to be a Jew. But the confrontation is only somewhat less sharp in Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities with substantial Jewish populations. Perhaps the only place where the term "white liberal" is not used to mean the "Jewish liberal" is in San Francisco. The reason is that radicalism in San Francisco has a peculiarly non-Jewish base in Harry Bridges's International Longshoreman's and Warehouseman's Union; moreover, the Jewish group there contains many early settlers who are closely identified with San Franciscans of the same class and origin. Indeed, in San Francisco, there was never even a Jewish ghetto available to become transformed into a Negro ghetto; yet the fragment of a Jewish ghetto that did exist is now part of a Negro ghetto.

And this brings us to yet another new twist in the historic confrontation of Jew and Negro. I do not know why in so many American cities Negro settlement has concentrated in the very areas that originally harbored Jewish immigrants. There are possibly three reasons. First, Jews have on the whole favored apartment-house living, and apartments provide cheap quarters for newcomers. Second, Jews have been economically and geographically more mobile than other immigrant groups who arrived around the same time (for example, Italians and Poles), and consequently their neighborhoods opened up to Negroes more rapidly. And finally, Jews have not resorted to violence in resisting the influx of new groups—in any case, most of them were already moving away.

But as Jews kept retreating to the edges of the city and beyond, the Negroes, their numbers and in some measure their income rising, followed—in recent years, as far as the suburbs. This is a problem, of course, for the same reasons that it is a problem for any white property-owner or home-owner: fear of the declining real-estate values that can be occasioned by a flight of panicky white residents; fear of changes in the neighborhood affecting the schools and the homogeneity of the environment. Obviously, Jews are not the only people caught up in such concerns; but since migrating urban groups generally follow radial paths outward (a pattern that is not so marked in New York, broken up as it is by rivers and bays, but that is very clear in inland cities like Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and Cincinnati), this new Negro middle class has moved into Jewish areas far more often than statistical probability alone would lead one to expect. Here again, therefore, a novel type of tension—specifically involving middle-class groups and home-owners—has been introduced.

In a number of suburbs Jewish home-owners of liberal outlook have banded together in an effort to slow down the outflow of whites and thus create an integrated community (which, of course, also helps to maintain the value of their homes). But to create an integrated community not only means slowing down the outflow of whites; it also means reducing the influx of Negroes. In some cases these good—from the Jewish point of view—intentions (and they usually *are* good) have looked, from the Negro point of view, like just another means of keeping Negroes *out*, but this time using the language of liberalism instead of race prejudice. We are all acquainted with the paranoia of persecuted minorities, and many jokes that used to be told of Jews (for example, the one about the stutterer who could not get a job as a radio announcer because of "anti-Semitism") could now be told of Negroes—and would be just as true.

ALL THIS forms part of the background of Negro-Jewish relations today. But in the immediate foreground are the new demands that have come to be made in the North and West by the civil rights movement. Negroes are acutely aware of how few of their young people even now get into the good colleges, and they see as a critical cause of this the small proportion of Negroes in good public elementary and high schools; they are acutely aware that their large-scale entry into the ranks of the clerks and typists of our huge public bureaucracies has not been accompanied by any equivalent entry into the higher positions of the civil service; they know that their new junior executive trainees in the large corporations are matched by hardly any Negroes higher up in these great private bureaucracies. And since political pressure and organized group pressure have been effective in breaching segregation in the South, and in bringing about some of these entries in the North, they see no reason why similar pressures should not be equally effective in making good the deficiencies that continue to be apparent. If whites say, "But first you must earn your entry—through grades, or examinations," Negroes, with a good deal more knowledge of the realities of American society than foreign immigrants used to have, answer, "But we know how *you* got ahead—through political power, and connections, and the like; there-

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fore, we won't accept your pious argument that merit is the only thing that counts."

There is some truth to this rejoinder; there is, I believe, much less truth when it is made to Jews. For the Jews have, indeed, put their faith in the abstract measures of individual merit—marks and examinations. Earlier, before school grades and civil-service test scores became so important, they depended on money: it, too, could be measured, and the man who had it could manage without any ties of blood or deep organic connection to the ruling elite of the land. In addition to this, the reason merit and money have been the major Jewish weapons in overcoming discrimination, rather than political power and pressure, is that only in exceptional cases (New York City is one of them) have they had the numbers to make these latter means of advancement effective. As a result, their political skills are poor (where are the master Jewish politicians in America?), but their ability to score the highest grades in examinations and to develop money-getting competence still shows no sign of declining.

The ideologies that have justified the principle of measurable individual merit and the logic of the market place, where one man's money is equal to any other man's, have always appeared to Jews, even more than to other Americans, almost self-evidently just and right. And the New York *Times*, which most of the newer Negro leaders dislike intensely, expresses this liberal ideology in its purest form. The *Times* has never been tolerant toward the accommodations that others have sometimes seen as necessary in our mixed and complex society—the balanced ticket, for example, which has nothing to do with the abstract principles of merit.

But the liberal principles—the earlier ones arguing the democracy of money, the newer ones arguing the democracy of merit—that have been so congenial to Jews and so much in their interest are being increasingly accepted by everyone else nowadays under the pressures of a technological world. We are moving into a diploma society, where individual merit rather than family and connections and group must be the basis for advancement, recognition, achievement. The reasons have nothing directly to do with the Jews, but no matter—the Jews certainly gain from such a grand historical shift. Thus Jewish interests coincide with the new rational approaches to the distribution of rewards.

IT IS CLEAR that one cannot say the same about Negro interests. And so the Negroes have come to be opposed to these approaches. But when Negroes challenge—as they do in New York—the systems of testing by which school principals and higher officials in the educational bureaucracy are selected and promoted, they are also challenging the very system under which Jews have done so well. And when they challenge the use of grades as the sole criterion for entry into special high schools and free colleges, they challenge the system which has enabled Jews to dominate these institutions for decades.

But there is another and more subtle side to the shift of Negro demands from abstract equality to group consideration, from color-blind to color-conscious. The Negroes press these new demands because they see that the abstract color-blind policies do not lead rapidly enough to the entry of large numbers of Negroes into good jobs, good neighborhoods, good schools. It is, in other words, a group interest they wish to further. Paradoxically, however, the ultimate basis of the resistance to their demands, I am convinced—certainly among Jews, but not Jews alone—is that they pose a serious threat to the ability of other groups to maintain *their* communities.

In America we have lived under a peculiar social compact. On the one hand, publicly and formally and legally, we recognize only individuals; we do not recognize groups—whether ethnic, racial, or religious. On the other hand, these groups exist in actual social fact. They strongly color the activities and lives of most of our citizens. They in large measure determine an individual's fate through their control of social networks which tend to run along ethnic, racial, and religious lines. Even more subtly, they determine a man's fate by the culture and values they transmit, which affect his chances in the general competition for the abstract signs of merit and money.

This is not an easy situation to grasp. On the one hand (except for the South) there is equality —political equality, equal justice before the law, equal opportunity to get grades, take examinations, qualify for professions, open businesses, make money. This equality penetrates deeper and deeper into the society. The great private colleges now attempt to have nationally representative student bodies, not only geographically, but socially and economically and racially. The great private corporations reluctantly begin to accept the principle that, like a government civil service, they should open their selection processes and their recruiting procedures so that all may be represented. On the other hand, these uniform processes of selection for advancement, and the pattern of freedom to start a business and make money, operate not on a homogeneous mass of individuals, but on individuals as molded by a range of communities of different degrees of organization and self-consciousness, with different histories and cultures, and with different capacities to take advantage of the opportunities that are truly in large measure open to all.

Here we come to the crux of the Negro anger and the Jewish discomfort. The Negro anger is based on the fact that the system of formal equality produces so little for them. The Jewish discomfort is based on the fact that Jews discover they can no longer support the newest Negro

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demands, which may be designed from the Negro point of view to produce equality for all, but which are also designed to break down this pattern of communities. We must emphasize again that Jewish money, organizational strength, and political energy have played a major role in most cities and states in getting effective law and effective administration covering the rights to equal opportunity in employment, housing, and education. But all this past cooperation loses its relevance as it dawns on Jews, and others as well, that many Negro leaders are now beginning to expect that the pattern of their advancement in American society will take quite a different form from that of the immigrant ethnic groups. This new form may well be justified by the greater sufferings that have been inflicted on the Negroes by slavery, by the loss of their traditional culture, by their deliberate exclusion from power and privilege for the past century, by the new circumstances in American society which make the old pattern of advance (through formal equality plus the support of the group) less effective today. But that it *is* a new form, a radically new one, for the integration of a group into American society, we must recognize.

IN THE PAST, the established groups in American society came to understand, eventually, that the newer groups would not push their claims for equality to the point where the special institutions of the older groups would no longer be able to maintain their identity. There were certainly delicate moments when it looked as if the strongly pressed and effectively supported Jewish demand for formal equality, combined with Jewish wealth and grades, would challenge the rights of vacation resorts, social clubs, and private schools of the old established white Protestant community to serve as exclusive institutions of that community. But after a time the established Protestant community realized there were limits to the demands of the Jews, as there were limits to the demands of the Catholics. They realized that Jews and Catholics could not demand the complete abolition of lines between the communities because they too wanted to maintain communities of their own. Most Jews wanted to remain members of a distinctive group, and regardless of how consistent they were in battering against the walls of privilege, they always implicitly accepted the argument that various forms of division between people, aside from those based on the abstract criteria of money and achievement, were legitimate in America. Thus, when John Slawson of the American Jewish Committee argued against the discriminatory practices of various social clubs, he did not, I believe, attack the right of a group to maintain distinctive institutions. He argued rather that Jews in banking or high politics could not conduct their *business* if they were not accepted as members of these clubs. He did not attack social discrimination as such—he attacked it because of its political and economic consequences and suggested it was abetting economic and political discrimination. The grounds he chose for his attack are revealing, for they indicate what he felt were the legitimate claims that one group in American society could raise about the way the other groups conducted their social life.

Now it is my sense of the matter that with the Negro revolution there has been a radical challenge to this pattern of individual advancement within an accepted structure of group distinctiveness. The white community into which the Negro now demands full entrance is not actually a single community—it is a series of communities. And all of them feel threatened by the implications of the new Negro demand for full equality. They did not previously realize how much store they set by their power to control the character of the social setting in which they lived. They did not realize this because their own demands generally did not involve or imply the dissolution of the established groups: they never really wanted to mingle too closely with these established groups. They demanded political representation—which assumed that the group continued. They demanded the right to their own schools, or (like the Catholics today) support for their own schools—which again proceeded from the assumption of group maintenance. They demanded equal rights in employment, in education, in housing. But as a matter of fact many of their jobs were held in business enterprises or in trades controlled by members of their own group. Many of them set up their own educational institutions to create the kind of higher education they thought desirable for their young people. If freedom of housing became an issue on occasion, such freedom was nevertheless used as much to create voluntary new concentrations of the group as to disperse it among other people.

The new Negro demands challenge the right to maintain these sub-communities far more radically than the demands of any other group in American history. As Howard Brotz has pointed out, the exclusion of the Negro from his legitimate place in American society was so extreme, so thoroughgoing, so complete, that all the political energy of the Negro has been directed toward beating down the barriers. The corollary of this exclusive focus is that most Negroes see nothing of value in the Negro group whose preservation requires separate institutions, residential concentration, or a ban on intermarriage. Or rather, the only thing that might justify such group solidarity is the political struggle itself—the struggle against all barriers. What other groups see as a value, Negroes see as a strategy in the fight for equal rights.

We have become far more sophisticated in our understanding of the meaning of equality, far

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more subtle in our understanding of the causes of inequality. As a result, political equality alone—which the Negro now enjoys in most parts of the country—is considered of limited importance. The demand for economic equality is now not the demand for equal opportunities for the equally qualified: it is the demand for equality of economic *results*—and it therefore raises such questions as why some businesses succeed and others fail, and how people are selected for advancement in large organizations. When we move into areas like that, we are not asking for abstract tolerance, or a simple desisting from discrimination. We are involving ourselves in the complex relationships between people, and we are examining the kinds of ties and judgments that go to make up our American sub-communities. Or consider the demand for equality in education, which has also become a demand for equality of *results*, of *outcomes*. Suppose one's capacity to gain from education depends on going to school with less than a majority of one's own group? Or suppose it depends on one's home background? Then how do we achieve equality of results? The answers to this question and many similar ones suggest that the deprived group must be inserted into the community of the advantaged. For otherwise there is no equality of outcome.

THE FORCE OF present-day Negro demands is that the sub-community, because it either protects privileges or creates inequality, *has no right to exist*. That is why these demands pose a quite new challenge to the Jewish community, or to any sub-community. Using the work of Oscar Handlin and Will Herberg, the Jewish community has come up with a convenient defense of Jewish exclusiveness—namely, that everyone else is doing it, too. The thrust of present-day Negro demands is that everyone should *stop* doing it. I do not interpret Jewish discomfort over this idea as false liberalism—for Jewish liberalism, even if it has never confronted the question directly, has always assumed that the advancement of disadvantaged groups, both Jews and others, would proceed in such a way as to respect the group pattern of American life. But the new Negro leaders believe Negroes cannot advance without a modification of this pattern. The churches, one of the major means by which group identities maintain themselves, are challenged by the insistent Negro demand for entry into every church. And if the Jews, because their church is so special, are for the moment protected against this demand, they are not protected against demands for entry on equal footing into other institutions which are the true seats of Jewish exclusiveness—the Jewish business, for example, the Jewish union, or the Jewish (or largely Jewish) neighborhood and school. Thus Jews find their interests and those of formally less liberal neighbors becoming similar: they both have an interest in maintaining an area restricted to their own kind; an interest in managing the friendship and educational experiences of their children; an interest in passing on advantages in money and skills to them.

The Negro now demands entry into a world, a society, that does not exist, except in ideology. In that world there is only one American community, and in that world, heritage, ethnicity, religion, race are only incidental and accidental personal characteristics. There may be many reasons for such a world to come into existence—among them the fact that it may be necessary in order to provide full equality for the Negroes. But if we do move in this direction, we will have to create communities very different from the kinds in which most of us who have already arrived—Protestants, Catholics, Jews—now live.

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LIONEL ABEL

IS THERE A TRAGIC SENSE OF LIFE?

For Merry Abel, 1940-1964, in memoriam

Our Estimate of Writers with the "Tragic Sense"

We set a particular value on those writers of plays—sometimes of novels—who give expression to what has been called the "tragic sense of life." Do we overvalue them? The truth is, I think, that we value them in a very special way. For we see demonstrated in their works the possibility of viewing life other than with optimism or pessimism; and for ourselves, when we reflect, the only possible choice lies with one or the other of these extremes. So that it is not only the art of the writer of tragedy we admire, but some special insight, which we feel that without his aid we are denied, and can only achieve through his intervention, but which he—for that is our assumption—enjoys by some peculiar privilege of rare wisdom, or intelligence, or some yet more mysterious endowment. He seems more *philosophic* than other writers of equal art or scope, so that by a kind of tacit consent philosophers have honored the authors of tragedy as the most *philosophical* of writers. In this estimate of the writer of tragedy I think there is a misunderstanding of his very special achievement, hence also a misunderstanding of what he achieves—namely, tragedy. If we correctly think out what we are right to admire the author of tragedy for, we can correct some wrong notions of what tragedy is.

Our Dissatisfaction with Optimism and Pessimism

Now it should be clear why optimism as an attitude toward life cannot satisfy us. It should be clear, too, that our dissatisfaction with it is mainly *intellectual.* For we are quite naturally optimistic insofar as we are active beings, living in time and planning the future which our very life structure requires us to think of as being capable of yielding to our purposes. But when we reflect, when we remember "Things said and done long years ago," and also the things we did not say or do, as well as those said and done by others, we cannot but realize that there are a great many negative facts. Only a few of these, and there are a great many of them, would be enough to invalidate any optimistic hypothesis that the world as it is can be truthfully described as *good.* Instances of such negative facts may be remote or local; the unjust sentence passed on Socrates, or the example raised by André Malraux at a Congress of Soviet writers during the 30's, of a man run over by a trolley car.* Such negative facts are able to render void all optimistic *generalizations* about the world, just as a few tiny facts which remain obdurate to explanation are sufficient to refute a whole scientific theory accounting for a multitude of others. So those who live by optimistic beliefs are like bad scientists, clinging, despite the evidence, to refuted theories.

But what about the negative facts? Do they at least justify pessimism? Not as a hypothesis, not as a generalized view. For the negative facts comprise merely one set of facts, and the world is such that no one set of facts is able to speak for it. Alas for the heartbreak of the defeated and the dead! If we do not straightaway share their fate—we are forced to think of something else.

The Russian thinker Shestov—I will not call him a philosopher—repeated again and again in his writings that the injustice done to Socrates was a fact he could not endure. He thought, too, that a fact of this sort should make us suspicious of any facts we ordinarily think of as positive. But even if the positive facts were far fewer than the negative they could still not justify our electing for pessimism. (For Schopenhauer a preponderance of negative facts did justify pessimism; his argument lacks subtlety.) The positive facts remain, and they prevent us from resolving without artificiality in favor of a pessimistic view. A very few positive facts can make pessimism unacceptable. This is illustrated, I think, in the Biblical story of Abraham's debate with God when He was intent on destroying the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham argued that if

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* The reply made to Malraux was that the Soviet authorities would see to it that accidents of that sort decreased annually. The argument of the Soviet writers was for optimism, to them obligatory; the greater relative safety of future generations would more than make up for the absolute harm which had befallen a single man.

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there were even ten good men in those cities, the Lord's proposed action would be unjust. And God finally conceded Abraham to be the better philosopher, admitting that if there were even fewer than ten good men in Sodom and Gomorrah, His pessimism about the two cities would be unjustified, notwithstanding all the wicked in them.

That the positive facts stand in the way of a resolve for pessimism is not in any sense an argument for being optimistic. Far from it! It is a sad fact indeed that sadness is no closer than lightness of spirit to the very heart of things.

What argues for optimism is that it is required by our life structure. If we plan to be optimistic, then at least we are not contradicting ourselves; but if we plan to be pessimistic—and since we live in time, to be pessimistic means to plan to be pessimistic—then we are contradicting ourselves; we are placing our trust in the view that things will be untrustworthy; we are reasoning that Failure cannot fail, and so, in a sense, can be depended upon. Then, too, except in cases of present or permanent distress, optimism is natural and spontaneous, while pessimism is inevitably theatrical. Life requires optimism; but optimism leaves out of account and quite disregards pain, frustration, and death; such disregard is, of course, intellectually shallow. So we are back with our dilemma: we can be optimists or pessimists; but can we *want* to be either?

The Tragic Sense

And the remedy is a fantastic one: it is a vision of the irremediable. We go to the theater to see a tragedy. We see human action in the clearest light the mind can cast on it, and behold, we see the human person at his best. We do not disregard pain or frustration or death; in fact, we give them our whole attention, and they do not make us pessimistic, they give us joy. As Aristotle said, we are relieved of pity and terror—the very emotions pessimism would yield to and optimism would avoid. We see life tragically; we have for the duration of the play at least, and perhaps for some time afterward, the tragic sense. Would that it were more lasting!

Can we make it so? Can we not make permanent the view of life we enjoyed in the theater and in recollection afterward for however short a time? Can we not acquire or develop a sense of life such as the playwright himself must have had? Of course we cannot be Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Racine. The question then is: can the tragic sense be acquired without the special genius of the writer of tragedy, and if so, how?

Why We Cannot Acquire the Tragic Sense

Suppose, though—for I think this true—that what we call the tragic sense does not form part of the playwright's genius and does not involve superior capacities of mind. Then it must be the result of experience. Of what experience? The answer to this question is obvious, we should have thought of it immediately: the experience which leads to the tragic sense of life is the experience of tragedy; it is by undergoing tragedy that one arrives at the tragic sense. Or rather, the word "arrives" is misleading here, for one does not acquire or develop the tragic sense, it is not realized but imposed; one never possesses it; one has to be possessed by it.

We cannot add the tragic sense to our present sense of life, be that present sense optimistic or pessimistic. And without our present sense we have neither terms nor criteria with which to decide whether the tragic sense is worth what it will cost us. And from this it follows that no reason can ever be given for recommending the tragic sense, however good or great a thing the tragic sense may be.

Mr. Herbert J. Muller in a recent book, *The Spirit of Tragedy*, has had the temerity to urge on us the acquisition of the tragic sense for reasons which he himself does not deny are frankly utilitarian. He writes: "We might not continue to get along as a free open society without more of the tragic sense of life." I think the error he has fallen into is expressed in his use of the word "more." If we had *some* of the tragic sense of life, then perhaps we could get still *more* of it, but it would not be the drastic thing it is if that were the way it could be come by. The prospect we would face, if we had not just "more" of the tragic sense, but enough of it to have it, would be one of all or nothing.

So we cannot urge the tragic sense on ourselves or on others. To try to attain it or to recommend it is comical and self-refuting, tragedy being real only when unavoidable. There would be no such thing as tragedy if a tragic fate could be rationally chosen.

The Writer of Tragedy and the Philosopher

But what about the writer of tragedy? Must he not possess the tragic sense of life since he is able to make it available to us at least for the time we spend under his spell? Is there not reason for thinking that the writer of tragedy must have a more permanent relation to the tragic view than those who receive it from him? Does he have a special philosophy, a tragic philosophy if you please, permanently his and which, through his art, he is able to share with us in some small measure?

I do not think the writer of tragedy has to have any view of life drastically different from our own. Supposing he were a philosopher, what difference would that make? He could not by means of philosophy resolve the question of optimism or pessimism, which we, who are not philosophers, face. For philosophies are also either optimistic or pessimistic. (Some philosophies are neutral, but this last attitude is finally subsumed under pes-

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simism. Neutrality to life really means pessimism about it.)

And when the vision of a writer of tragedy is stated philosophically it is always converted (I submit, necessarily) into a form of optimism or of pessimism. I shall give two examples. The first is taken from Matthew Arnold's famous poem, "Dover Beach." Arnold, looking out at the sea from Dover Beach and hearing in the cadence of the waves the "eternal note of sadness," thinks of Sophocles:

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; . . .

And the image of Sophocles hearing the note of "human misery" leads Arnold to this pessimistic declaration:

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

The view of life expressed here is not one that I, or any one else, could derive from seeing a performance of *Oedipus, Oedipus at Colonus,* or *Antigone.* Perhaps Sophocles had such thoughts when he looked at the Aegean, but these are not the thoughts we think when witnessing his tragedies. And from the reports about Sophocles by his contemporaries, we are scarcely justified in calling to mind an individual contemplating human misery. The tragic poet was said to have been charming, gracious, genial, and with no better opinions about politics or life than other cultivated Athenians.

The wonderful Spanish writer and thinker Miguel de Unamuno, who is actually responsible for the phrase "the tragic sense of life," trying to state this "tragic sense" as a philosophical attitude, converts it, I think, into a refined and pleasing, though somber, form of optimism. Unamuno's tragic sense is even a misnomer; there is little that is tragic about it, for he is not urging us to set something above life; rather what he does urge us to set above life is nothing more than life, immortal life, the immortality of the soul, on which immortality he asks us to gamble the existence we are certain of. That this violently optimistic Christianity should attract us with its death-splashed Spanish cloak is due, of course, to our obscure recognition, even if we have not thought the matter through, that optimism presented simply as optimism would offer us only what we are well acquainted and dissatisfied with.

A novel and, I think, quite wrong view that thought, even philosophic thought, can have and has had a tragic cast is presented by Lucien Goldmann in his much-praised book on Pascal and Racine, *Le Dieu Caché* ("The Hidden God"). According to Goldmann, there are certain philosophers whose thought can be characterized as tragic. He cites as instances Pascal and Kant. Why is their thought tragic? Because, says Goldmann, it expresses the conflict in them between alternative and exclusive world views, the world view of mathematical science and the world view of revealed religion. But surely no character on the stage would be convincing in the tragic hero's part if his torment were due to nothing more drastic than his inability to choose between or mediate conflicting views. In fact, Kant and Pascal did both. What I mean is this: Kant opted for religion in his metaphysics and for science in his epistemology. And I think Pascal did the same in his distinction between *l'esprit géométrique* and *l'esprit de finesse* (reasoning of the mind and reasoning of the heart).

I submit that it is not through any particular philosophy that the tragic writer is able to give expression to his tragic sense of life, although this tragic sense does have for us, the audience, a virtue which has been called philosophic. Then is it by art alone that the writer of tragedy affects us as he does?

The Writer of Tragedy without the Philosopher

The very great probability is, I suggest, that the writer of tragedy is no more endowed with a tragic sense of life than are we to whom he makes it available. By which I mean that he, too, in his regular experience of life is condemned to the same unsatisfactory choice between optimism and pessimism that we are, and that only in the act of writing tragedy, only by making the tragic view available to us, is he himself enabled to envisage life in its terms. His creation then is a communion with us, in the experiencing of a view of things which we could not have without him, but which he in turn can only have insofar as he is capable of extending it to us.

Why could we not have the tragic sense without the *written* tragedy? Let us consider this point from a somewhat different angle. There is something we could have without the help of art, and which many people may confuse with the tragic sense, namely, the feeling of a *pessimism that is justified.* This is all we can get from the lesser masters of the art of tragedy, from Euripides and Webster at their best, and from Shakespeare in his unsuccessful tragedies such as *Troilus and Cressida, Coriolanus, Julius Caesar,* and *King Lear.* Moreover, it is not this which makes them tragic. When Richard in Shakespeare's *Richard II* complains of the vulnerability of kings—

. . . for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court; and there the antic sits . . .
Allowing him a breath, a little scene . . .
. . . and humour'd thus,

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Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell King!

he gives expression to a pessimism which in view of his situation he is certainly justified in feeling. And the greatness of the verse penetrates Richard's feeling completely; what he says seems all the more inevitable because said in lines of such power. Who can be secure if the best protected of men, the king, is not? It is to be noted that a negative fact, in this instance death, armed with so mean and trivial an instrument as a pin, is seen as rendering meaningless the highest state a man can aspire to, that of kingliness. Later in the play Richard will say that man

. . . who but man is
With nothing shall be pleased till he be eased
By being nothing.

The feeling expressed here of life's meaninglessness we may all have felt, indeed must have felt, at some time or other and with some measure of poetry too, for such feelings provide a verbal talent all by themselves. We would not need the art of tragedy to acquaint us with such a judgment of life nor even with the necessity to pronounce it consummately.

A judgment of life similar in its pessimism to Richard's and equally justified is uttered by Macbeth:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

This judgment, too, we could form for ourselves without either the experience of tragedy or Shakespeare's art. But what we could not get without actual or invented tragedy is the experience of resolution when nothing can follow from resolve, a resolution beyond optimism or pessimism, hope or despair. This we get from Macbeth's great words:

Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane
And thou opposed, being not of woman born,
Yet will I try the last.

Richard's speech about the death of kings is a protest against the weakness and impotence of the most highly placed. Macbeth's lines of resolution express a much more complicated feeling, one in which are allied, to use Heidegger's terms, utter impotence and super power. Richard's lines about the death of kings, justifying pessimism, point to the negative fact, death, which renders optimistic notions of life invalid even for a king. Macbeth's lines of resolution refer to no negative facts at all, nor to anything common in human experience, not even to the common experience of kings, but exclusively to the withdrawal of their aid from him by those metaphysical beings, the witches, who had for a time supported him. Macbeth's lines are thrilling; Richard's are merely sad. What has to be explained is why Macbeth's lines thrill us, and why he had to pass through the experience of tragedy in order to be able to utter them. The weakness of Richard is evident, so is Macbeth's. But whence comes Macbeth's power?

What is Tragedy?

In tragedy, it is not the negative facts, rendering optimism invalid, which cause ultimate misfortune. Such negative facts as commonly threaten all of us are even converted in the mechanism of tragedy into positive goods. Blindness is an evil; yet Oedipus deliberately blinds himself. Death we would think is to be avoided at all costs; yet Antigone elects to die and denies her sister Ismene the same privilege. Ajax, when told that if he spends the day in his tent he will be allowed to live, deliberately leaves his tent and falls on his sword. In the tragic universe the negative facts of experience are finally unimportant. What might lead us in ordinary life to be pessimistic is never the cause of tragedy.

What is the cause, then, of tragedy? It is the opposition, as Hegel affirmed, of two conflicting goods. Tragedy is never caused by what is unambiguously evil. It is the sheerly positive in conflict with the sheerly positive that destroys the tragic protagonist. In the Greek world it was the collision of the values of the family with those of the state. For these contrary values, as Aeschylus and Sophocles understood them, could not be held to with equal fidelity in any superior experience of life. The superior man would inevitably violate the one or the other.* Perhaps it may be said that while this may have been true of the ancient Greek world, it was not true of the Shakespearian world. For in what sense can the witches who incite Macbeth to kill Duncan be called sheerly positive? In what sense can they be called representatives of the good? Are they not an expression of unmitigated evil?

If they were, *Macbeth* would not be a tragedy. It would be a melodrama, and Macbeth's story would merely be that of a villain defeated. But once again: in what sense can the witches be said to represent the good? In this sense: the witches in *Macbeth* are the only dramatic expression of the metaphysical. Duncan, the reigning king, is presented as kingly, just, morally upright. But Macbeth and Banquo are the characters in the

* It may be asked: Why is a collision of values different from a collision of world views? But a collision of views, even if we call them world views, takes place within *consciousness* and not within the *world*. Values such as the family and the state are not merely values; they are valued realities. I should like to point out here that one of the most interesting insights of Martin Heidegger—much more interesting than his remarks about anguish and guilt, which have become part of current twaddle—is his judgment that world views imply the absence of a world rather than a world's enduring presence. Tragedy takes place in a world, not in a consciousness which is uncertain as to what the world is.

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play who have direct contact with the representatives of the metaphysical—that is to say, the witches. Now in *Macbeth* the metaphysical does not coincide with the moral, but is at odds with it; yet both are to be valued. Since the justification for kingship was finally metaphysical—the Elizabethans believed in the divine right of kings as opposed to any merely moral right to kingship—how could an immoral deed of murder to attain kingship, when metaphysical forces (in this case, the witches) seemed to support that deed, be thought of as evil? And, in fact, we never feel Macbeth is evil. We think of him as suffering, suffering because he has violated moral values he cannot deny, in support of values neither he nor Shakespeare's age could think criticizable in moral terms. As in the Greek tragedies, we have in *Macbeth* good pitted against good, and the protagonist is the victim of their collision. What is dreadful, then, is never the mere negative facts ordinary experience fears. It is the good which is dreaded and has to be dreaded. Søren Kierkegaard, peculiarly sensitive to these matters, summed up what, I think, can be called the experience of tragedy when he said in his acute analysis of dread that it is fundamentally dread of the good.

What Has the Writer of Tragedy Seen?

So the tragic writer has to have seen some collision of good with good in order to have been able to arrange the events he describes into a tragedy. Was he predisposed to see some such collision of good with good? Not, I should say, if it were not there to be seen, even if only he saw it. For can we want to see what it is undesirable to see? Some of us may, out of ambition or perversity, but not the writer of a proper tragedy. He sees what it is undesirable to see, without desiring to see it. This is one of the things we admire him for. To be sure, there are others. But in any case, what must be understood here is that the object of his vision was given by his age or epoch, and not created by him alone. The collision of good with good which he witnessed had then to be given him along with others to see; his part was to take what he saw, and what others may have seen, and fashion it into tragedy.

Thus the tragic view, properly understood, means to have seen the necessity for tragedy, to have recognized it rather than to have created it. That the tragic vision results from a direct act of seeing, and not from the holding of any particular view, or from any predilection for interpreting reality tragically, is something we must understand in order to evaluate that vision and judge it for its true worth. Just as in the tragedy he is going to write, the dramatist will set forth a sequence of events whose connections are necessary, so he himself can only be stirred to set forth such a sequence of events by the sight of a fatality that was thrust upon his view, and which was necessarily, not accidentally, there before him.

Once again: what did he see? A collision of good with good. Is it desirable that such a collision come within our view? Not in life. No. Nobody can genuinely say that he wants to see a tragedy enacted anywhere but on the stage. For it is a misfortune to a society or to a culture if its main values contradict one another. On the other hand, tragedy, that art which expresses the collision and not the harmony of such values, is in itself a positive aesthetic good. But this good, this aesthetic good, is achieved through an appropriate description of the ultimate in human misfortune: that men's values should contradict rather than support one another.

Once Again "The Tragic Thinker"

Perhaps it is right to say of the writer of tragedy that his thought, since it had to be equal to what he saw—what he saw was tragedy—is a kind of "tragic thinking." But this can only mean that the writer of tragedy has not permitted any philosophy or ideology to impede or obstruct his vision. But what about those thinkers who have been called "tragic," as for instance Pascal? As I indicated before, I think the term "tragic" when used to designate the thought of anyone not the writer of a tragedy is always wrongly used. Nonetheless, there are in Pascal's *Pensées* many dramatic characterizations of experience which give us a kind of thrill comparable to the kind we get from tragedy. My contention is that in the case of such *Pensées*, Pascal has merely created an abstract replica of the kind of collision of values we find embodied with ever so much more concreteness in tragic poetry. Here is one of the most famous of Pascal's thoughts:

> Man is but a reed, the feeblest of Nature's growths, but he is a thinking reed. There is no need for the whole universe to take up arms to crush him; a breath, a drop of water, may prove fatal. But were the universe to kill him, he would still be more noble than his slayers: for man knows that he is crushed, but the universe does not know that it crushes him.

Now I think what we have here is an imitation in conceptual terms of the kind of event set forth in a real tragedy. It is to be noted that Pascal begins by saying men can be destroyed by a drop of water or a breath; but he chooses not to continue the thought that men can be destroyed by such small means. The drop of water, the breath, are tiny facts: acting negatively, they would be of no interest in tragedy. So in Pascal's thought they are expanded—in possibility, of course—into the universe. From the breath, the drop of water, Pascal goes to the whole universe which he imagines in the act of overwhelming a man. Even then, says Pascal, the man would be nobler than his slayer. But in any case, the slayer would be noble, being the universe. Insofar as Pascal's thought here may strike one as tragic, I should

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say that the event he has described was modeled on that structure of events always present in a true tragedy. For he who is destroyed in a true tragedy is always destroyed by something of worth. The drop of water, the breath may be thought of, as I said before, as tiny facts behaving negatively, but which Pascal had finally to forget about and obscure from his view in order to make a true judgment of man's nobility in misfortune.

What We Should Admire in the Writer of Tragedy

Let us turn from the "tragic thinker" to the writer of tragedy. Why do we admire him? Not for his philosophy, for he has none. If he does hold to one in his personal life, this is not pertinent to his achievement or to our judgment of it. Nor are we required to think of him as a master of experience, as wiser or more deeply human than ourselves. Let us admire him for his art; we should recognize, though, that what he gives us goes far beyond what art generally or regularly gives. And let us admire him for his luck, too, at having been given by his age the opportunity to see in his mind's eye certain paradigm instances of human adversity. Does not Pushkin say that the day after the flooding of Petrograd, *"Khostov, poet, favorite of the heavens, already sang in verses never to die the griefs of Neva's shores"*?*

Moreover, the effort the writer of tragedy makes has to be immense. He has seen the collision of the main values of his age or culture; he has seen the non-meaning of meanings. Now the mind naturally seeks for meanings; the writer of tragedy has to deny and reverse this process in the very movement with which he yields to it.

His interest is, of course, an aesthetic one. May I speak for just one moment from a professional point of view? When you have written a play you are faced with this problem: what does this play mean? If it is meaningless, it is uninteresting. Suppose it does have a meaning, though. This is scarcely better. For have you not then reduced the action in your play to the illustration of an idea? Now illustrative art is scarcely better for many of us today than is meaningless art. Here the idea of tragedy exerts its fascination. For it is the kind of idea that attains to its truth only when represented in the work itself: the play, the tragedy. We are much more clear about what tragedy is when we see a tragedy enacted than when we try to reason about tragedy.

And let us not forget that what the writer of tragedy gives, he himself gets in the very act of giving: communion with us in a privileged view of human adversity. We admire him then for what he has seen and what he makes us see, a world where the highest values collide and in which we know we could not live. We recognize this when the curtain comes down and we do not know where to go. We have to become optimists or pessimists again in order to think of going home.

* From Pushkin's poem *The Bronze Horseman* in Edmund Wilson's translation.

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JOHN MANDER

THE STRANGE DEATH OF TORY ENGLAND

A GENERATION AGO, in an interesting book, George Dangerfield told the sad story of what he called "The Strange Death of Liberal England." The collapse of a great political tradition is a solemn thing. How, people asked, did it happen? How, within ten years, could the triumphant Liberal party of the pre-1914 era, the reforming party of Lloyd George, Asquith, Haldane, Grey, and Winston Churchill, have lost out to the Labour party as the main champion of the British Left? There were, of course, reasons to hand: the bitter feud between the Lloyd-Georgeites and the supporters of Asquith, and the general increase in socialist strength and militancy in Europe that followed on the First World War. But Liberalism in Britain had had deep roots. Religious non-conformism had long been a powerful force. The radical legislation of the pre-war decade should have enabled the Liberal party, like FDR's Democratic party twenty years later, to keep its grip on the working-class vote. In the event, Liberalism crumbled. And with it fell that whole in-and-out, Whig-and-Tory, Eton-and-Harrow, Tweedledum-Tweedledee structure of British political culture that had lasted for over two centuries.

What is the relevance of this to Britain's recent, and rather unsensational, General Election and change of government? The Labour party, after all, won by the narrowest of margins. The British people were plainly in no revolutionary mood. The results of the election reflected pretty accurately a desire for change, but not for revolutionary change. In actual votes, the Conservatives suffered a loss of one-and-a-half million, a clear verdict against Sir Alec Douglas-Home and his administration. But the Labour party failed to increase its share of the poll and got even fewer votes than it had in 1950-51. The real victors were the Liberals, who increased their share of the vote to over three million. (The number of Liberal voters varies, of course, with the number of Liberal candidates actually standing; but it is a fair assumption that, had Liberal candidates been running in every constituency, the party's vote would have topped four million—some 15 per cent of the electorate.)

Despite all this, however, it would be a mistake to underestimate the significance of the fall of Sir Alec's administration. Harold Wilson won by a tiny margin in 1964; but so did John Kennedy in 1960. In politics, after all, winning is winning. And the advantage that accrues to the victor, if he can exploit the prestige and power of his office, is formidable. It is plainly the case that the Kennedy image failed to take America by storm when it was first promoted. Yet, within two years, office had so magnified the Kennedy image that the President appeared unbeatable to his political opponents. If he plays his cards well—and it is worth recording that Mr. Wilson's campaign reading was Theodore H. White's *The Making of the President, 1960*—I believe that Harold Wilson has a good chance of achieving something similar to what Kennedy achieved before him.

Is this going too far? What chance has Wilson to establish himself, when even his best friends would not claim that he is exactly a charismatic figure, and when death or illness could deprive him overnight of his slender majority of five? Before the final results of the election were in, commentators generally agreed that a majority of at least fifteen seats in Parliament was mandatory for efficient government. Against this, Sir Winston Churchill's remark was much quoted, to the effect that a majority of one is enough. I have little doubt that Churchill was right—but only on one condition. A government with a weak majority must not act as a weak government. It is imperative for it to act boldly and quickly, using all the resources at its disposal. What offends the electorate is a faltering administration; this was the trouble with successive Labour governments in Britain in the past. It was not the revolutionary boldness of Ramsay MacDonald's administrations, in 1924 and 1929, that led to Labour's downfall: on the contrary, the socialist wolves of the hustings quickly became bureaucratic lambs in office. To be sure, these early Labour administrations were compelled to rely on Liberal votes in the House of Commons. But they fell, ultimately, because the public sensed a lack of vigor in their handling of affairs. The Labour government of 1945 with its landslide victory was a different matter. But the

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second postwar Labour government (1950-51), with its majority of less than ten, quickly fell prey to its own dissensions and to the tactics of attrition employed by its opponents. Yet by general agreement, the 1950 government did not go down because of the smallness of its majority alone; it failed because the party had lost the moral impetus it possessed in 1945. Some of its best leaders, Bevin and Cripps, were dead. Herbert Morrison, Labour's finest organizer, was proving a poor Foreign Secretary. The resignation of Aneurin Bevan, Harold Wilson, and John Freeman over the post-Korea rearmament program led to the disastrous Left-Right split of the 1950's. By the autumn of 1951, the fight had gone out of the Labour movement. The electorate responded, predictably, by returning a Churchill government —though with a mere majority of seventeen.

Churchill's 1951 administration, then, held power by a margin only slightly greater than that of the Labour administration it replaced—or, indeed, that of the Labour administration of today (the figure usually given, five, is somewhat deceptive, for on most issues the nine Liberals in the House of Commons will vote with the government, making an over-all majority of twenty-three). Yet whatever the faults of that final period of Churchillian rule—and they were many—the new Conservative government did not suffer demoralization as a result of its slender majority. From our present perspective the Conservative 50's in England already look—and I suspect will increasingly look—like one of the classic do-nothing periods of British government. But this was not the impression made on the electorate at the time. There was a flurry of Churchillian activity: "Overlords" were appointed to direct Britain's "return to greatness"; Churchillian wartime paladins rode again; not the austerity, but the glory of Britain's wartime role was lovingly evoked. Today, of course, it all rings hollow enough. The facts of Churchill's virtual inability to govern, and of Eden's unsuitability as Crown Prince, are now pretty well known. It is now all too plain that at the moment when the rest of Europe was emerging from the dark years of the 40's, and was poised for the rapid advance of the 50's, Britain had begun to lose her momentum. Of course, the British people were as much to blame as their government; indeed, the government reflected the British popular mood very precisely. It was not until October 1964 that the British people took retribution on the government they had elected thirteen years earlier—retribution for indulging their weaker impulses, rather than offering them emphatic leadership.

If, then, the apparent activism of the second Churchill government was in reality a sorry facade, the point is that it did not matter. Nor did the smallness of the government's majority count very much. What counted—and this is certainly applicable to the present situation—was the impression of strong, purposeful leadership that the electorate was given by the government, assisted in this by a divided and demoralized opposition and a new generation of supremely self-confident Tory MP's (including such now eminent names as Maudling and MacLeod). In the spring of 1955, the Tory administration, now under Sir Anthony Eden, was returned with a larger majority. Four years later, Macmillan led his party (the Suez debacle brushed under the carpet) to a still greater victory.

THERE WERE, to be sure, many factors making for the drift toward conservatism in the 50's: increasing affluence, Labour's own divisions, a certain tiredness and unwillingness to try new courses that beset the whole of the British people after the huge and heroic efforts of the 1940's. But the underlying reason for the Conservative triumphs of the 50's was, I believe, very simple. The Conservatives *looked* like a ruling party and Labour did not. The Labour party seemed unable to resolve those tensions between Right and Left, between full-blooded socialism and liberal reformism, that had come into the open with Bevan's resignation in 1951. To all appearances, the Left actually preferred political oblivion to any tampering with inherited socialist principles. (R. H. S. Crossman—to give one example—was arguing after the 1959 defeat that the Labour party should be prepared, if necessary, to wander for twenty years in the wilderness rather than turn itself into a progressivist party on the model of the American Democrats. Mr. Crossman, it may be noted, is now in high office as Minister of Housing in the Wilson cabinet.) And the Right, for its part, apparently preferred to reserve its thunderbolts for the enemy within, rather than the enemy without.

For ten years, then, from the resignation of Bevan to the defeat of the unilateralists in October 1961, it was Labour that appeared to have lost the will to govern. Only in October 1961, when Hugh Gaitskell finally reasserted the authority of the leadership, and after the Conservatives had moved into yet another period of economic troubles, did the tide show signs of turning. With the collapse of the attempt to join the Common Market, the Tories began to falter. Too late were the "modernizers"—Heath, Boyle, Maudling—given their heads and encouraged to reconstruct the image of the Conservative party. But the indecorous struggle for the leadership in October 1963—between Hogg, Hume, Butler, and Maudling—revealed the near-panic that had seized the Conservative hierarchy. At last the situation was reversed: the Labour party was now united under the leadership of Harold Wilson; the Conservative party was in disarray. The electorate was not slow to appreciate this sudden reversal.

If this analysis is correct, it is plain that Harold Wilson has only one course: he has to govern boldly. He must initiate—or at least, to put it more cynically, appear to initiate—strong, clear, daring policies and act as if he *were* at the head of a powerful parliamentary majority. If he does so—and there is plenty of evidence that this is his

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intention—his reward could be a majority that would enable him to govern Britain until the end of the present decade. If he falters, the chances are that the Conservatives will return, and that Labour will fall again into disarray.

My own guess is that Harold Wilson will bring off this gamble. He has the nerve; he has the skill and the knowledge; and he has not so far made a single false step. There is no disposition anyway among the Conservatives to underrate him. His present team, it is generally agreed, is not satisfactory. He has brought in too many antique party war-horses from the back-benches who in a year or so will have to be put out to pasture. He has also failed to promote some of the younger, and very able, Gaitskellites who had been universally tipped for office. But it would be wrong to accuse Wilson of factional bias—a charge which Gaitskell could hardly escape. True, he has rewarded those who helped him to the party leadership. But he has balanced his administration delicately between the more senior former Gaitskellites—George Brown, Anthony Crosland, Roy Jenkins—and his own former playmates of the Left—Barbara Castle, Frank Cousins, Anthony Greenwood, and Richard Crossman. He intends quite certainly to be a party leader and Prime Minister on the Attlee model—if anything, more so. In their day, Attlee and Bevin were kept under continual harassing fire from bodies like Crossman's "Keep Left" group. The left-wing of the parliamentary Labour party—about seventy strong—is something of a biological prodigy: it has dissolved and reformed itself several times from the days of Keep Left, through its Bevanite phase, to the unilateralist "Victory for Socialism" group of recent years. At all costs Wilson must prevent the emergence of a coherent left-wing faction in the parliamentary party. He will do this, no doubt, by bringing prominent left-wingers into the administration and by dangling the bait of future office before others. But he will certainly heed Attlee's view, too often disregarded by Gaitskell, that the Labour party, as a coalition of interests, can only be successfully led from the political center.

In any case, the objections to Wilson's new administration as inexperienced will probably fall away. Many of the new names are unfamiliar to the public; yet most have had years of parliamentary experience. Again, men grow with office. Most of the 1951 crop of Conservatives were totally unknown at the time; yet within five years reputations had been made, and within ten years effective control of party policy was passing into their hands. If Labour remains in power, it is almost certain that the Croslands and the Jenkinses, and still younger men like Bill Rogers and Anthony Wedgwood Benn, will follow the Heaths and the Maudlings. There is no real substance in the charge that Wilson's will be a one-man administration, or that Labour lacks suitable government material in its younger echelons. None of this, admittedly, would seem to amount to a revolution. It proves, at most, that Labour can provide as competent government as the Conservatives—something serious political observers have never doubted anyway.

BUT THAT is perhaps not quite the end of the matter. For the return of Labour after thirteen years in the wilderness changes the British political landscape in a subtle and important way. Left-wing parties are generally plagued by an "underdog complex," the result of their identification with the political and economic interests of the non-governing classes, their association with labor unions or despised immigrant groups. And in Europe, they suffer from an additional psychological disadvantage. Whereas their opponents come from a coherent and self-confident group, their own leadership is often split between "renegades" from the traditional governing class—frequently intellectuals from the universities—and trade-union men with the greatest suspicion of those who have entered "the movement" from the outside. To make things even more difficult, socialist ideology tends to combine with the trade-union outlook to reinforce the negative, "protestant" element that always underlies left-wing movements: it is often more satisfying to register a protest than to face the challenges of power. Now, if we look at the three most powerful left-of-center parties in the West—the American Democratic party, the German SPD, and the British Labour party—it is evident that Labour stands somewhere between the SPD and the Democrats in this respect. The Democratic party, plainly, is the prime example of a left-of-center party that has become fully "legitimized." The SPD, on the other hand, still labors under the old Wilhelminian charge that it is a body of *vaterlandslose Gesellen* ("men without a fatherland"), that it is not *staatserhaltend*, not a part of the national ethos. It held power, of course, in the days of Weimar. But it was never accepted by the German bourgeoisie as a fully legitimate element in the national polity. Thus, though the SPD did remarkably well in last September's *Land* elections (achieving 45 per cent of the vote—a proportion far removed from the 33 per cent of the early 50's, and comparable to the vote of British Labour), there are few who would be optimistic enough to predict an absolute majority for the party in the 1965 elections. The SPD's weakness today, like Labour's in the past, is that it does not look, and often does not behave, like a governing party. Until it does, it is not likely to achieve power. The contrast with the American Democratic party hardly needs to be emphasized.

Admittedly, the social composition and background of the three parties are very different. But the problem of self-projection as a credible alternative government is not entirely dissimilar. In Britain, of course, the picture is complicated still further by a peculiarly intricate structure of class emotions which has no equivalent in other Western countries. It did not matter that Dr. Adenauer

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spoke German with a Rhineland accent, or Professor Heuss with a Swabian; and Herr Strauss's ambition will not be contained by his Bavarian manners and lower-middle-class antecedents. But in England, at least until now, these things *have* mattered a great deal. One-third of the British working class votes Tory; and it votes Tory because it prefers to be ruled by officers and gentlemen, and not by its own kind. The problem of presenting an image that will neither offend the middle and lower-middle classes and the Tory-voting working class too sharply on the one hand, nor alienate traditional trade-union support on the other, has therefore been especially difficult for the Labour party.

In Attlee and in Gaitskell, Labour found leaders who, though sometimes lacking in personal impact, were reassuring to the Establishment-minded in all classes. But the brand-image of the party remained obstinately working-class. Every industrial strike, and particularly the frequent wild-cat strikes that plague British industry, confirmed the middle class in their view that Labour was the party of "them" and not "us." The great Labour triumph of 1945 might have been expected to end all this—to "legitimize" Labour at last as the true successor of the great Radical party of Asquith and Lloyd George. Most political observers in those years would have taken this view. The successive Tory victories of the 50's, however, showed that the trick had not, after all, been turned. Even after six years of power the Labour party image was still far closer to that of the SPD than to that of the American Democrats. Harold Wilson's achievement will be (one hopes) to prove that he can "legitimize" Labour at the same time as he resolves the class divisions that have bedeviled the party in the past.

In this, Wilson's own "classless" image could be of very great importance. For the first time Britain has a Prime Minister, and Labour a leader, who is neither lacking in personal self-confidence nor belongs obviously to the upper class like Gaitskell, nor to the working class like Bevin. It is perhaps hard for those who have not actually lived in Britain to realize the significance of this. Wilson is a man to whom the traditional English class distinctions simply do not matter. He is not, like Gaitskell, *indignant* about the public school system: he regards it as irrelevant. He speaks with a Yorkshire accent; but far from making him folksy, this seems to reinforce his curiously anonymous, classless personality. He is known to be fonder of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding than of Continental wines and cuisine. He is, at the core, intensely British. But he is a new breed of Englishman, closer to the grammar-school-educated, non-upper-class heroes of Kingsley Amis's novels—rather puritanical, a little philistine, contemptuous of "gentlemanly" values—than to the bowler-hatted figure of the whiskey ads. Of course, the phenomenon is not really as new as it appears. The tradition of non-conformist dissent, rooted in the lower-middle class, has been there since the 17th century. But the type of Englishman represented by Harold Wilson has seldom attained supreme power. Now, helped along by the scientific and technical revolution of recent years, he is fast becoming the "typical" kind of Englishman. It is to this classless Britisher—the trained technologist, the skilled worker, the new intelligentsia from the redbrick universities—that Wilson is consciously directing his appeal. The often painfully inadequate performances of Sir Alec Douglas-Home during the election campaign have made it plain that, though the Englishman still loves a lord, he would rather have a non-gentleman of evident competence to look after his national affairs.

FROM WHAT I have said it might seem that British Labour was moving steadily toward the position of the American Democratic party. In general, I think this is true. But there is one obstacle to such a development which is not so easily to be overcome. Thirty, if not forty years ago, the Liberal party was already being declared dead by the experts. After 1945, the verdict seemed beyond dispute. Yet it is now clear that the Liberal party, long moribund, refuses to lie down and die. Why is this? What does British Liberalism really amount to as a political force? Is it no more than a Poujadist phenomenon, a movement of protest rather than of constructive intention? Until recently, judging by by-election results, many commentators would indeed have written it off in this fashion. But a party that can muster some 15 per cent of the national vote cannot so easily be dismissed. There is obviously a large and perhaps politically rather sophisticated minority that rejects both the Labour and the Tory images. Except in the "Celtic fringe" (where it represents the interests, mostly agricultural, of underdeveloped regions in the national economy such as northern Scotland, rural Wales, and the West of England), the Liberal electorate is middle- and lower-middle class. The party appears, in other words, to attract the very kind of people Harold Wilson needs if he is to bring Labour closer to the Democrats. Nor is there much mystery as to why this section of the electorate votes Liberal rather than Labour: it is repelled by the working-class image of the Labour party. The recent election has shown that there is a decisive anti-conservative majority in the country at present. But it has also shown that the Labour party is not yet in a position to profit fully from the leftward swing of the pendulum.

For the Labour party there are two possible solutions to this problem. One is to enter into an electoral pact with the Liberals, by which Labour candidates would move out of certain constituencies, and Liberal candidates out of others. By this means, the Labour majority could possibly be increased by twenty or thirty, and the representation of the Liberal party by an equal amount. But this would imply a conscious, Labour-sponsored revival of the Liberal party. And there is no doubt

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that Labour will refuse to give up its claim to be the left-wing party *par excellence*. The solution that Harold Wilson almost certainly envisages is a swift appeal to the country within the next year or so that will force the Liberal voter to choose between a radical Labour program and conservative torpor. Such an appeal would probably prove irresistible to the reservoir of progressive middle-class Liberal sentiment in the country and it might annihilate the Liberals altogether. The position of the Liberal party, apparently so favorable after this election, is therefore in reality extremely precarious. It can certainly not oppose Labour's reforming measures without alienating its "progressive" supporters. But to cling too closely to Labour's apron-strings could prove equally disastrous. Everything depends on whether Harold Wilson can present his party as the natural instrument of progressive action within the national polity. If he is able to do so, it is hard to see how the Liberal party can have much future. But if he cannot, if Labour's working-class image continues to alienate middle-class voters, the Liberal party may even increase its present strength—and split the anti-conservative vote to the detriment of both left-wing parties.

My own belief is that Harold Wilson will succeed in his general strategy. I think it likely that, if the moment is carefully chosen (and it must not be forgotten that a British Prime Minister can determine his own electoral chronology), Labour is almost certain to be returned with a larger majority. The resulting attrition of Liberal support will, in my opinion, be extremely damaging to that party's prospects.

But the most significant change that this rather dull election campaign will bring about is long-term. Removal from office after thirteen years of power will not destroy the Conservative party, which has shown remarkable recuperative abilities in the past. But it will destroy the left-wing defeatism that was characteristic of the years 1951-1961. England in the 50's looked irrevocably Tory: the class system appeared to have been re-established, the egalitarian hopes of the 40's to have been in vain. The picture that now emerges is startlingly different. The Tory England of the 50's begins to look more like a throw-back, a nostalgic reminder of the years before the deluge. And it also begins to look as if the strange death of Tory England were the result of the hubris of the Tory party itself. It was, in the end, the presumption that the return to Tory rule after 1951 simply constituted a return to normalcy that undid the Tory party. For this presumption implied that for an English Tory it is not necessary to do, it is only necessary to be. The complacency bred of this view was what led to the do-nothing policies of the 50's and the 1964 defeat. The Tory party, no doubt, will know how to reform itself and will regain power under altered conditions. But the assumption that Conservative government in Britain is "natural," and that periods of non-Conservative government are sad lapses from national orthodoxy and good sense, is not likely to survive. In this sense, "Tory England" may well have come to an end once and for all—with a remarkable lack of fuss—in the election of October 1964. The passing of Liberal England, also, was a quiet and unspectacular affair. That, they say, is the way the English prefer their revolutions. The style has its disadvantages: but political verdicts of this kind are not necessarily less final for being quiet and unspectacular.

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I. J. SINGER

CONVERTS

A Story

IT WAS EARLY on a hot morning, when the only ones in Warsaw's Saxony Gardens are old usurers, consumptives, and people without the price of a meal. Sitting in my usual spot near the clock, I was absorbed in experimenting if I could actually feel a minute pass by counting to sixty. It was a rare means of forgetting my hunger.

Past my bench strolled a gentleman with a great shock of hair, eyeglasses, and a cape; he was walking a small dog with precisely the same hair and mincing step as his own. Even the dog's nose resembled the master's, it was flat and broad and lacked only the gold-rimmed glasses depending from the flaring ears.

I could sense the man's eyes on me. To be sure, the moment I looked up he dropped his eyes and made a show of scolding his dog: "Quiet, Beck!"

But soon he was again examining me. He lingered purposefully around the bench and asked suddenly: "May one sit down, sir?"

"Be my guest. The whole bench is free. . . ."

We sized each other up. There would be conversation and we were waiting to see who would begin it.

The gentleman in the cape coughs the dry, forced cough of a half-baked schoolboy trying to pick up a girl in the park. According to the ground rules, it is now up to me. All I have to say is a word or two, such as: "Awfully hot day" or "What a nice little doggie."

But I don't say it. Maybe it's my hunger: ordinarily I would not be so cruel to another human being.

However, my neighbor can hold out no longer. "A most interesting country, yours. To find such a young man sitting in the park at this time of day—never happens at home. No, never!"

He has me trapped. His opening is so obvious that I don't dare pass it up.

"May one ask where that is?"

"Yes, of course, young man. England."

I look up. How strange. They say the English are so fair, so reserved. Yet my companion is swarthy, curly-haired, and his nose seems to have been specifically built to hold up spectacles. Moreover, he apparently talks a blue streak.

"Hm. But what about the unemployed? People who don't—who—unh—well—"

"Have nothing to eat?"

"Right! Right! . . . Are there no such people in England?"

"Of course, but in any event, they don't sit in parks."

"Then where?"

"There are houses in England put up by dedicated men of good will. There you can get a meal, a night's lodging, and a good book to read as well."

I looked past him. I was deeply sorry I wasn't in England at that moment, where such decent and godly people exist.

My neighbor filled me in about the generosity found in his country: "We try to help everyone," he said. "Negroes, and Gypsies and Chinese and Indians and heathens and Jews. . . ."

"What are you trying to tell me?"

"You can make up your own mind, young man. Come along. . . ."

Again we looked each other over. I thought about it: I'm not a girl, I'm flat broke. So I rose eagerly. "Let's go. . . ."

He took the leash in one hand, my arm in the other.

"Benjamin Klebfish."

As I walked at his side, I was further perplexed. In none of the English novels I had read in translation had I come across such a name. . . .

THERE WAS NOTHING to fear at the house of the Englishman—not for a girl, not even for a man with a bankroll. There were even some women there, ugly redheaded ones. I couldn't understand a word of what they were saying. It sounded like the gibberish of children talking in a make-believe language. They finally began speaking to me in the broken German of Galician Jews with its sprinkling of Yiddish expressions. They all had odd names for Englishwomen: Miss Katz, Miss Gold, Miss Barbanel, Miss Shapiro.

But even more strange were the two men I met. One was tall, lean, with yellow eyebrows and an unusually pointed adam's apple. He spoke in a rasping chant and wore a long surcoat buttoned to

I. J. SINGER (1893-1944) was the well-known Yiddish writer; his works include *The Brothers Ashkenazi* and *Yoshe Kalb*. The present story, translated by Joseph Singer, has not previously appeared in English.

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the neck. He introduced himself to me as "Pastor William Isaac Fishlzohn." The other was a hunchback with a flowing, carefully combed beard and a high rabbinical forehead which bore the round mark of a discarded skullcap. As I was being led up to him he wiped his brow with a red kerchief, then extended a flabby, debilitated palm to press mine with all the tranquility of a pious Sabbath greeting.

One of the homely redheads introduced him as "Mister Ganz."

I mumbled my name in acknowledgment and asked: "Also an Englishman?"

"Decidedly," the hunchback said expansively, "my godfather was the famous Lord Kerton. . . ."

I coughed. I always cough when I have to keep from being rude, particularly by laughing. Fortunately, one of the redheaded girls quickly led me into a far-off room and asked: "Do you prefer your sour cream mixed with cheese or separate?"

I sat down and ate. From the room I had just left came the sounds of an organ—chords so righteous and frigid that one completely forgot the hot summer weather. I felt that I wasn't eating with propriety. This wasn't a feeling, but a fact. My enforced fast had loosened my teeth—especially the molars. I had the sensation that the cheese and sour cream could be seen through my wasted cheeks and that my jaws were trembling rapidly like an old cur's muzzle around a bone. Above me hung a naked Jesus, who was gazing with a deep concern into my eyes. He seemed to be pleading with me: "Don't bolt your food, my son, you're liable to choke. . . ."

EACH MORNING thereafter I came to the "English."

I ate sour cream and cheese separately, and I ate sour cream and cheese mixed. I listened to the hymns of the redheaded girls which sounded like a chorus of cats on a rainy March night. Afterward, I would go into the small chapel which was furnished with silk pillows. In the front stood a wooden statue of Jesus with a fair beard and red, gaping wounds at the heart, the hands, and the feet. Pastor Fishlzohn and Mister Ganz would be present, along with the quorum of Jews who had been coming here for weeks to learn the teachings and become members of the Anglican church—or, as Pastor Fishlzohn liked to phrase it, "to prepare to be reborn. . . ."

Among them were people from different parts of the world: One was a worried merchant from Russia who came with his wife and daughters. Having been driven out of his native city, he had dropped all of his business activities and journeyed to Warsaw to be converted. He wanted no part of the Greek Orthodox faith—not having the time to waste on attending its frequent services or consultations with priests. He merely wished for a speedy conversion so that he could get back to his business. There was a high-school graduate who was about to enter the university and already wore his blue uniform with shining brass buttons. A young engineer from Warsaw came with a technician's pin in his lapel; he was starting a job with the railroad. There was also a young widow newly married to a convert, and a crippled Jew from the provinces who had come to Warsaw to beg but had been brought here instead by Mister Klebfish. He now sat around day after day waiting for the matter to be disposed of so that he could grab the few gulden that went with his rebirth and then thumb his nose at "dear old England."

Pastor Fishlzohn sat facing the group and slowly chanted the prayers, word after word, from an open book. He read first a chapter in English, then in Yiddish, just as the weekly portion of the Pentateuch is read in the synagogue.

"And the Lord Jesus went to Bethlehem. . . .

And Mary was driven forth. . . ."

The others hung their heads as they sat there, too ashamed to face one another. When Pastor Fishlzohn asked, "Do you understand?," they would nod, although they understood little of the text. Mister Ganz tried to help them out. He knew that the merchant and his family spoke only Russian, the young engineer only Polish, and the cripple only Yiddish. Therefore he paced around the room with a silent, rabbinical tread, nibbling on the tip of his beard, tugging at his sideburns while he helped with the more difficult words, much like a Hebrew teacher at an examination.

"Matthew, chapter three. . . . Isaiah, chapter thirty-seven. . . ."

Now and then the merchant from Russia managed to catnap; he snored through his nose. Bored and disgusted, I would have a strong urge to catch the few flies that lighted on Jesus's maimed hands because they believed the blood was genuine. I felt sorry for Beck. He would steal surreptitiously into the chapel and sit facing Pastor Fishlzohn—listening so avidly that I expected him at any moment to pose a question of such intricacy that not even the Pastor could answer it.

When the day's lesson ended, everyone would breathe easier except for the merchant's wife. Massaging a foot that had fallen asleep, she harangued her husband: "Well, Sasha, wouldn't it have been better to go to the priest at home? We'll be stuck here until—"

The merchant would rub his sleep-encrusted eyes: "Who knows? Go know what would be better. . . ."

MY CHEEKS became filled out and ruddy. Besides the sour cream and cheese, the redheaded girls stuffed me with milk and chocolate. I no longer sat in the Saxony Gardens among the moneylenders, the consumptives, and the hungry, but frolicked in the paths with the nursemaids and governesses. I gave them the chocolate I had gotten from the "Englishwomen" and then we would sidle off into the thick forest while their charges in the carriages bawled "Nana! Oh! Nana! . . ."

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I gave no thought to the lessons in the chapel. But one Sunday as I arrived, I stopped in surprise. The chapel had been prepared as if for a holiday. The organ kept playing incessantly. Pastor Fishlzohn wore a strange sort of frock, long, black, and shining, and without a single button. The redheads wore black dresses as fully cut as governesses' uniforms. Standing on tiptoes on a chair, Mister Ganz was placing a fresh crown of thorns on Jesus's head. The prospective converts were dressed in their best.

I could see that the "Englishmen" were now playing for keeps. As I debated whether to go inside or run away, one of the redheads suddenly took my arm: "What? Aren't you dressed yet? Come. . . ."

It all went smoothly at first. Pastor Fishlzohn asked for names, ages, addresses, and reasons for conversion. Everyone knew the proper reply by heart: "Conviction, *Herr* Pastor."

Even the dour merchant from the interior of Russia seemed to glow. He looked frequently at his family with an air of satisfaction and said, "A man is a man, after all. . . ."

The redheaded ladies held hands and hugged, as old maids will, and tried to appear reverent and meditative. Mister Klebfish buffed his gold-rimmed eyeglasses, rearranged the book on the lectern, and moved the candles about. Mister Ganz padded about silently, chewed the end of his well-groomed beard, tried to adjust the frock coat to his infirmity, and altogether maintained the demeanor of a deacon at a lavish wedding who anticipated the banquet to follow.

Pastor Fishlzohn rose to his full height, opened the old book with its wooden covers and began to read. Before my eyes materialized a parade of wizened, bewhiskered people with shining halos about their saintly heads, bearing osier branches. Angels and deformed Gentile women, barefoot and in flowing robes, stretched out long arms and snatched corpses from their graves. Cherubim—stout, fleshy, moppets with aprons around their bellies—frolicked after lambkins with garlands woven into their spiraling horns. Half-naked creatures with thick legs and sheep's heads threw stones, cursed, and strained to strangle one and tear him to shreds.

The audience listened to all of it. The pastor's litany even intrigued the merchant from Russia although he understood not a word. Mister Ganz padded up silently and whispered: "The baptismal water is ready."

Without warning Pastor Fishlzohn faced the group, coughed once or twice, and said to the young engineer: "What would you say, dear sir, if you were asked why the Lord Jesus ate of the sacred bread?"

The young engineer grew red in the face and began to stammer: "Yes . . . yes . . . well—"

Pastor Fishlzohn also blushed. Reverently lifting a finger he said with conviction: "No good! He who would be a good Christian must first be a good Jew. . . ."

He abruptly faced the merchant's family. "What would you say, ladies and sir, if you were asked why the Lord Jesus picked the corn on a Sunday?"

The merchant stared wide-eyed. His wife and daughters looked at him with terror. Pastor Fishlzohn had turned a deep crimson. His observation regarding Christians and Jews was one of his pet expressions. An aged Anglican minister had uttered those very words to him at his own conversion many years ago and they had rung true to him. Now he turned to the cripple: "Does not Matthew say in chapter—"

The silence in the chapel grew even more intense. It was so quiet that we could hear the rumbling in Mister Ganz's stomach. The hunchback knew that there was no possibility of an answer from the crippled Jew. I was the only hope left, and he came up to me and poked a pointed finger into my side: "Go on—say it! Chapter seventeeen . . . sev-en-teen! . . ."

I knew that there was a pre-arranged answer for this leading question. But while Pastor Fishlzohn's adam's apple bobbed up and down, and Mister Klebfish's nose grew even longer, and while the cowed Jews looked at me pleadingly, and Mister Ganz probed my ribs and urged, "Say it, numskull, say it!" my vocal chords somehow perversely reversed themselves. Laughter—vigorous, hearty, and liberated laughter—escaped my throat and resounded crashingly throughout the hushed chapel: "Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! . . ."

The Russian and his family began to bicker and gesticulate violently. The cripple stuttered. A redheaded girl went into hysterics, and Messrs. Ganz and Klebfish began to wring their hands furiously, to pant and to shriek like teachers in a *cheder*: "Glutton! Sot! Ingrate! Thief! You should be barred from every decent Jewish household!"

Above us, Jesus hung with his crown of thorns askew. With eyes cast heavenward and fair beard tinted yellow by the reflection from the candles, he now looked more like a small-town rabbi. . . .

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THE STRENGTH OF ROBERT FROST

Alfred Kazin

BETWEEN 1954 and 1958, first in Northampton, then at Amherst, I saw Robert Frost often in the setting of a New England college town. In his eighties his presence was strong, vivid, gifted, contradictory, and passionate; I was fascinated by his sense of himself. He was continually presenting himself to professors and to students, filling them in on his life, expounding his views, reading his poems, and could get dangerously flushed with the excitement of "saying" these poems and then taking off from them for general remarks to people who were always younger than himself, dazzled by so much temperament, force, obstinacy, and intelligence. However, his own remarks, even when they were connected only by reference to his own career, were in detail usually close in thought, pithy, original in expression, and wildly felt; he was a startling unison of intellectual passion and of a sensibility still raw in its memories of pain.

Frost was very gifted, proud, honest, ambitious, religious, and mischievous. He was a figure of perilous balances and unyielding memories who seemed held together by his fierce pride as a craftsman and thinker. There was nothing in the local English departments that he did not want to know about or even take a hand in, and any professor of American literature, any critic or scholar who would be likely to write about him, was encouraged and informed with a matter-of-fact regard for his own fame and a shrewd interest in promoting it that was not without pride in what he could do for scholars. But shrewdly and paternally as he handled his admirers, he would respond to the mention of any other celebrated figure in contemporary literature with a guardedness, destructive gossip, and sometimes open anger that his own fiercely cherished place was being invaded in conversation. He was always irritable and resentful about Ezra Pound, who in 1913 had been among the first in London to praise Frost's first book, *A Boy's Will*, but had done this with such a possessive air that Frost had never been able to forgive him any more than he could forgive Pound his impresario's temperament, his contempt for American culture, his faking as a classical scholar, and his fame among the avant-garde.

Frost could be very puritanical about the celebrated; all he would say about Faulkner, after they had gone down to Latin America together on a cultural mission for the State Department, was that the novelist was "intemperate." If the listener took this as an unexpressed suggestion about Faulkner's novels—Frost had a poet's disapproval of fiction anyway as lacking true style—Frost would not exert himself to limit the criticism. He had the almost physical repulsion of other temperaments that often, not always, comes with very powerful imaginative capacity. He was just the opposite of the scholars and critics with whom he spent much of his time, for he was by no means prepared to consider another's opinion just because it had been published. His own critical thinking was original, speculative, fiercely practical, based on the principles he had worked out in defense of his own creative mission as a poet seeking to approximate the spoken language; younger poets he noticed chiefly when they evaded the test of skill, lacked dramatic tone and "sparkle," or slipped into liberal or radical postures that he despised as defeatism confusing itself into utopianism. The wildly self-assertive strength that I always saw in him, even when he was doing nothing but fend off questions that were useless to him, was his prime test of a man and his opinions. Strength he valued more than anything else, and he gave it a kind of metaphysical status in the universe at large. "Style is the way a man takes himself," he had written in an introduction to Edwin Arlington Robinson's *King Jasper*; it was one of his few published tributes to another poet.

FROST COULD BE very scornful about positions that he disliked; in the 50's, before John F. Kennedy came into his life and gave him such a new sense of power and importance that Frost began to feel that he, too, was part of the age of space and so gave his benediction to expanding government action, he was waspish and petty still about the most desperately needed social legislation of the 30's. Frost's politics were certainly conservative, if not as violently right-wing as some opinions in his family. Frost himself had the characteristic bitterness of the old-stock American who feels that he is being forced to pay for "alien" welfare schemes created to take care of the lazy and the incompetent. His real political hero was Senator Taft, who was also civilized enough to admire his poetry. Frost was very personal about people in office; just as Napoleon vaguely resented writers for being so ambitious, so Frost was prepared to admire "rulers" for being as strong-minded as writers. But until Eisenhower was finally prodded by Sherman Adams into inviting Frost to the

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White House, Frost was bitter that Eisenhower should have been indifferent to him and that the President preferred to associate with business executives. Kennedy's admiration helped to make Frost "a Democrat again."

Listening to Frost talk about politicians and politics in his way, I came to admire him for his fierce self-regard more than I would have expected to; whether cause or effect or accompanying condition, it was certainly connected with his great gift. A very old, swollen, slowly moving man, he defended every particle of existence left to him and remembered every grief with a depth of feeling for those he had lost; the subtlety and hardness of his thinking were particularly striking in the company of people always concessive, watchful, neutral, and subdued. He was from another species, where people were smarter but also not afraid to suffer. He was openly vulnerable. In the candid commentary to his large volume of selected Frost letters,* Professor Lawrance Thompson, Frost's designated biographer, contrasts Frost's lack of confidence with his strong pride in himself as a poet. Frost gave the impression of fighting to keep everything he had won, of having to triumph over every obstacle, of wanting to call on everything within reach for his continuing education. Of course I had known about Frost's early difficulties in getting a hearing, and that it was only in England, when he was thirty-nine, that he was able to get his first book published; I knew that he relished his many academic honors all the more because of his own brief and irregular attempts at a college education. But it was startling to find Frost reciting all his early college grades and still cursing Pound for a braggart as he walked up and down the cold Amherst streets after he had had a too exciting evening reading from his poems in Johnson Chapel and could not sleep. He would recite his life over again, exactly as he does in so many letters to scholars, critics, reviewers, and collectors in Professor Thompson's book. Yet the most extraordinary thing about his verbal memories was the spell they put on him as he recited them. The transitions were as wonderful, original, and clairvoyant as they are in his best poems; even when he was shaking with fatigue and cold but would obstinately refuse to go to bed until he had talked himself out, his ideas were sinewy, shrewd, right on the button. I understood better why Frost felt related to Emerson, despite the difference in their philosophies. One of Emerson's early biographers remembers him talking in a stream of perfect sentences even when he was dying. Frost's sentences were achieved definitions, and showed an obsessive drive to clarity. One felt that they were a physical necessity.

In quarters naturally hostile to poetry that requires intellectual effort, Frost enjoyed a misleading reputation as a poet accommodating to average capacities and prejudices. Actually Frost had a bleak, if stoical, outlook; the religious faith which in private came out like the most stubborn of his loves was perhaps more a fact in Frost's complicated personal strategy for living than in his work, which in its best period did not seek to express personal beliefs, but dramatized concrete situations as new material for poetry. What makes Frost's poetry unusually interesting to the general reader is Frost's subject matter, which is characteristic experience in dramatic encounters. Frost does not write about poetry or about making the modern world safe for poetry, the usual themes of romantic and symbolist poets, for whom the poet himself is the hero. Frost writes about situations which threaten the moral balance of the passerby who has fallen into the situation. He makes poetry out of the dramatic, startling contest with the negative blackness that begins everywhere outside the hard-won human order. Frost's poetry is about the strength needed for living one's life, and it is about living in a way that differs very sharply from the stock poetry of modern life as a tragedy of disbelief, from the self-conscious ironies of literary reference that make the poet sound like Hamlet talking to Polonius.

TO READ Frost's best poems is to have a series of satisfactions in the intellectual, emotional, and technical conquest of difficulties. They certainly do not inspire the reader with the wonder of pure imagination that is found in Yeats; even Hardy, whom we inevitably think of when reading Frost, gives the reader a sense of the Biblical cosmos, the more-than-human significance of the creation itself, that we do not find extending out of Frost's dramatic narratives. Frost's poems are directly about struggle; the terms of the struggle are defined with satisfying honesty and exactness, even to the epistemological difficulties that man encounters in getting to know the world. One feels in reading Frost's best pieces that he has defined certain difficulties of existence exactly, and has solved them just in the nick of time, so that little is left over for man's imaginative edification. Poetry now exists as if to assure us of another world, more worthy of our imagination; and when Eliot or Stevens actually makes us see this other world, we are dazed and grateful, as if the gold diffused in the sea had solidified and were now shining in our eyes. But Frost, who said that Stevens wrote on bric-a-brac, wanted to make poetry the triumph of this world. His hand-carved poems came out without the slightest concession to elegance, and the imaginative splendor he achieved, deeply impressive but by no means meant to impress you with splendor anywhere else, lay in the idiosyncratic truth of his lines, in the depth of experience that we associate with such masterful ability to achieve transitions. Just as Frost's God did not

* *Selected Letters of Robert Frost*, edited by Lawrance Thompson, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 645 pp., $10.00.

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seem to extend *to* the world, so that He held the balance of existence but would not influence it, so Frost's poems do not make living easier, or imaginatively more luxurious. But they are immensely satisfying, because of the voice that prevails in them.

THE FROST I briefly knew fought for fame, for control of his reputation, for mastery of human experience, on terms which he seemed able to impose on the younger and more passive people around him. So in this book of his letters, one hears Frost talking about his own life, advancing his career, handling the many people who were useful to him. A letter for Frost was an exercise in assertion, without the charm that the interplay of poetic narrative called out of him. Frost did not like writing letters and he did not surrender to anything when he wrote one. But the letters together make an impressive account of Frost's efforts to establish himself and to uphold himself. The severity of his struggles stuck to him in his triumph and became for him the characteristic mark of triumph.

Frost was born in San Francisco because his father, who sympathized with the Confederacy and named him after Robert E. Lee, was trying to make good as a journalist and editor away from his New England family. The father died of tuberculosis in his thirties, and the mother, a native of Scotland, then followed the body of her husband back East, where she taught in the public schools and eventually opened a school of her own in order to support the children. She educated Frost at home until he was ready for high school in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Frost tried Dartmouth for less than a semester, worked as a light-trimmer and gate-tender in the Lawrence mills, and was married at twenty-one to the remarkable girl who had been his fellow-valedictorian in high school. When he was already a father, he tried Harvard for a while as a special student, then withdrew. His crucial period was the nine years he spent on a farm in Derry, New Hampshire, where he wrote many of the poems that were to go into his first three books, *A Boy's Will, North Of Boston, Mountain Interval.* At a time when so many Americans from the rural areas were fitting themselves to the new urban pace, Frost, with a large family, was living in a corner of rural New England among farmers and small villagers whose speech fascinated him and whose difficulties became material for his poetry. He was to say later that the beauty of his first poems was "the unforced expression of a life I was forced to live," and he was proud that he had learned to "perform in a language absolutely unliterary." He would occasionally get a poem published in *The Independent,* but he remained unknown and virtually unpublished until he took his family to England in 1912. He found friends and admirers among the younger English poets, and encouraged Edward Thomas to write poetry. Thomas, who was to die in the war, became the closest friend that Frost was ever to have.

Frost returned from England in 1915 to find more interest in his work here than he had ever known before, and he was soon on his way to the many triumphs and honors that were to become such a fixture of his later life. But he was never to forget his long struggle for recognition, and at the height of his fame pursued it eagerly, while he blamed his many family tragedies on the new way of life that his success had imposed on them all. "All this sickness and scatteration of the family . . . a result and a judgment on us. We ought to have gone back to farming years ago or we ought to have stayed farming when we knew we were well off."

Of course Frost knew that the times had changed for everyone as well as for himself. The loneliness and mishaps of the farm folk among whom he lived in Derry, the deserted farms and lilac-choked cellars he had written about, were themselves instances of the cost of failure among those who could or would not join the bandwagon of progress. By the 30's the penalty for such failure would be multiplied in the millions. But Frost himself could not fail now and certainly would not tolerate failure. The many failures in the 30's perhaps frightened Frost even more than the new spirit of governmental intervention outraged him. Frost had an almost physical horror of anyone admitting defeat; a famous progressive educator once spoke to him of a school he had had to close as his "fourth failure," and Frost quoted this to me with indignation. Americans were not allowed to fail and America was not allowed to fail; if Roosevelt or anybody else in power spoke of America having failed in any particular, he was a weakling and in spirit a traitor.

As shown again by his letters on the subject of writers who went "left" in the 30's, Frost could be spiteful and unrealistic about the social crisis. He was also under the inflicted guilt in those years of mental illness, death, and suicide among his children; his morale was at its lowest after the death of his wife in 1938. And despite his established and almost official position as a poet, his work meant less to "crisis" readers following after Eliot than it had to the generation of the 20's delighted by his use of plain speech. At a time when his conservatism put him at odds with many other writers, he demanded more submission as a sign of his continued importance. He certainly enjoyed his power to dominate people in his circle, and infuriated Bernard De Voto by gossiping that De Voto's analyst had advised him not to see Frost, a personality too strong for him. Frost also kept collectors on the line, both for money and the maximum assurance of future fame. He became so valuable to collectors that he complained that he was getting nervous having to

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watch over his waste basket and his old, disowned poems in print. Yet considering some of the bargaining and maneuvering he went in for, it is remarkable how detached, as an artist, Frost remained in his last years. His poems were getting more discursive, but his hold on everything he claimed and on everybody near him was as fierce as ever. He was endlessly involved with American colleges and universities, collectors, lectures, readings, national figures.

Kennedy's admiring interest in him, climaxed by his unforgettable reading of "The Gift Outright" at the 1961 inauguration after the fierce winter sunlight kept him from reading the new poem he had composed for the occasion, must have seemed to Frost like the last true prize of his life. In a letter to Eisenhower, he had addressed him as the "ruler" of the greatest nation in the world; he would now help to rule with the new ruler, in a new era of "poetry and power." He was in Russia for eleven days on a cultural mission, but on his return waited in vain for Kennedy to see him. Apparently he irritated Kennedy by projecting onto Khrushchev the statement that the United States would never fight. The statement Frost gave the New York *Times* was that "Khrushchev said he feared for us modern liberals. He said we were too liberal to fight. I suppose he thought we'd stand there for the next hundred years saying, 'On the one hand—but on the other hand.'" Professor Thompson says in his editorial notes: "There were others who suspected that RF might have put the phrase 'too liberal to fight' into Khrushchev's mouth to unburden RF's own conservative and familiar obsession for equating 'liberal' with 'cowardly.'"

THE LAST TIME I saw Frost was in the spring of 1958, when he came back from Washington believing that his intervention with the Department of Justice had alone obtained Pound's release from St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Professor Thompson's material on Frost's part in the Pound case shows that Frost was brought in by Archibald MacLeish, who perhaps felt that his own political credit with the Eisenhower administration was not enough to help Pound. He drafted an appeal to the government signed by Frost, Hemingway, and Eliot. But Frost was sure that he had got Pound out. He sat in the President's house at Amherst talking with pride of what he had done for Pound, whom he disliked as much as ever. Pound's political views seemed to Frost just the marks of an exaggerated and disordered personality. Although he hadn't seen Pound in many years, he still felt troubled and threatened by Pound's excessiveness. By his intervention with Eisenhower's Attorney General, he had put order to what had been disorder, he had helped to close the case. He was proud of what he had done for Pound precisely because he disliked him; he had disciplined himself, and in a sense he had helped to administer a lesson to Pound, whether Pound knew it or not. "I did it," he said in pride and exhaustion, "I went right in there, to the office of the Attorney General, and I talked to him." Then he made a face. "That Ezra," he said.

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* * *

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

Jules Feiffer

LAST AUTUMN my wife and I made an early return from a delayed honeymoon trip to Europe in order to register for the national elections, a detail we engaged in on differing levels of seriousness: for she was registering in order to vote, and I was registering as the first step in my usual principled position—which was to not vote at all. (Not to deny that in the confines of the booth principle, on occasion, hasn't failed me—followed consistently by the candidates I voted for.)

This election was different, however. I *had* to vote for President (whatever my pacifist friends said, I could not see Lyndon Johnson as Tweedledee), and I *wanted* to vote for or against Kennedy for Senator—I couldn't decide which; I only knew it was important to take a stand. My original instincts were anti-Kennedy: he was, I thought, ruthless and arrogant. My later instincts were pro-Kennedy: he had, I thought, a lot of potential. My follow-up instincts were anti-Kennedy: he read the mail of people he put on trial—(anyone who made a civil liberties hero out of Roy Cohn was lacking, at least, in taste). My later follow-up instincts were pro-Kennedy: after all, it *was* Roy Cohn. And so it went. One day there was the image of Bobby as Joe McCarthy; the next day, the image of Bobby on the phone solving our urban crisis. It's a new Bobby, insider-friends-of-mine insisted. Remembering the new Nixon, I wondered . . . .

Still, whenever I saw his opponent on television, looking like a loaf of white bread and running under the assumed name of Jacob Javits, I knew Kenneth Keating was impossible. So wavering toward Kennedy I would switch to another channel only to see the former Attorney General up in Harlem on a bandstand crying out to the crowd: "All right, let's everybody sing—'We Shall Over-co-ome, We Shall Over-Co-ome.'"

I studied various versions of Keating's voting record, put them all together and discovered absolutely nothing. I gave up the effort: since it had never occurred to me that Keating was a liberal

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before, why should I work on the problem now? The reason was Bobby. I was looking for some excuse not to vote for him. And I was troubled about it. I had seen him in person once since the assassination—and he looked like Raskolnikov. His eyes were fogged, his smile vacant, his clothes looked like some other boy's. Dare you make him a loser twice, I wondered? Put that way, the answer was obvious. I discussed the matter with friends. They didn't know either.

In the meantime, the ad hoc mailings had begun: letters asking me to sign up with at least one organization whose affiliations might appeal to my sympathies: Democrats for Keating, Independents for Keating, Independent-Democrats for Keating, Young Socialists for Keating, Trotskyites for Keating; and from the other side: Publishers and Writers for Kennedy, Artists and Scientists for Kennedy, Movie-fans of the Late James Dean for Kennedy.

Ads, with long lists of names, that began: "We, a group of troubled Pulitzer Prize winners—" filled the back pages of the New York *Times*. Often they were names I admired. Was I willing to go against the wishes of John Steinbeck? I really didn't know. Seeking information, I started going to the parties.

EVERY POLITICAL candidate gives parties—or has his friends give parties: his Independent Friends, his Non-Partisan Friends, sometimes just his Citizen Friends. At these parties there are pretty girls, celebrities, and booze, the quality and variety of which depends on the finances—or degree of commitment—of the friends. To these parties are invited those who have not yet signed up—so if he likes parties, a man would be a fool to sign up too quickly. During the course of one's booze-downing and star- and-girl-ogling, the parties turn serious and the guest speaker, sometimes the candidate himself, is introduced to make his pitch. In the case of Keating, the pitch always had to do with the startling similarity of his and Senator Javits's voting records. In the case of Robert Kennedy, the pitch had to do with how, during the 1960 campaign, everyone had called his slain brother ruthless too.

The aim of the more publicized parties in the Kennedy-Keating campaign was to enlist that group that politicians and newspapermen refer to as intellectuals: in most cases meaning people connected with show business. (Paddy Chayefsky demanded to know what Bobby would do to make it safe for our wives to go around the corner without having to take a taxi. . . . Leonard Bernstein suggested that victory was clearly Kennedy's if only his team would publicize the fact that Herbert Brownell was Keating's campaign manager. . . .)

Most Kennedy defenders based their testimony on private sources of information: "I used to think he was that way too, until I got to know him—"; or: "Sure, he *used* to be that way, but he's grown. Yesterday he called Walter Jenkins. That's the kind of a guy he is."

The Keating partisans stuck close to Javits. "Javits, Javits, Javits," they said. And when Bobby's name came up: "McCarthy, McCarthy, McCarthy." "All right, don't vote for Bobby," a female Kennedy-show-biz-campaign-worker told me, "but don't vote for Keating either; that's not a real protest. A real protest is to vote for neither one."

At a Democrats-for-Keating party most of the guests turned out to be Republicans. "But we're voting for Johnson," they told me; tit for tat. Gore Vidal, one of the hosts, failed to show—being in Rome at the time. David Susskind, another host, advised Keating on the state of the campaign. The Senator treated him with the deference due a star, Susskind being nearly his only one.

The dearth of celebrities at the Keating parties bothered me; Kennedy's affairs really did much better. With whom did one prefer to go—the question insistently asked itself—which of these candidates had the potential for better parties in Washington? After several more parties this confusion was supplanted by guilt. After a good time, after lots of free booze, after shaking hands with Jacqueline Kennedy, is there not a tacit commitment? If so, could I in good conscience continue to attend Keating affairs, continue to drink his sponsors' booze, and continue to be in another part of the house when the Senator came in, so as to avoid the embarrassing problem of applause? (At his first party I stared straight ahead, both hands on my glass, uncompromisingly independent. The Senator caught my eye; I felt I had hurt him.)

Still, I continued to worry about Bobby's ruthlessness, "You see, his main problem is he has no ethics," the female-Kennedy-show-biz-campaign worker confided in me, "but that's because he's not Jewish. Now that he has Jewish advisers, they'll teach him ethics. Some of his people tried to get me to do something unethical last week and I refused. I said, 'I'd rather quit the campaign than do that; it's against everything I believe.' You've got to tell them things like that. That's the way they learn."

Despite her reassurances I still felt doubt. Doubt, guilt, and the subtle building of pressure: "Well, here you are again, Jules," hosts cruelly grinned at me, "didn't we sign you up two parties ago?" Rumors circulated that I really wasn't interested in the issues, I just liked parties. Hints of reprisals were dropped: "We'll remember who our friends are when it comes time for the *real* parties in Washington—"

So after interminable hours of internal debate, late-night phone calls to friends and confessors, complex analyses of the situation (and its effect on our future) with my wife, I at last gave my name to be used in a New York *Times* ad on behalf of Artists and Writers for Kennedy; and I

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gave my name to be used in a New York *Times* ad on behalf of Democrats for Keating. So long as they're happy. . . .

JULES FEIFFER's *cartoons appear in the New York* Post, *the* New Republic, *and other journals. He reviewed Mark Harris's* Mark the Glove Boy *in our May 1964 issue.*

* * *

ZANGWILL IN RETROSPECT

John Gross

ISRAEL ZANGWILL was born a hundred years ago this year, but in England his centenary has slipped by with barely a murmur. There have been a few rather lukewarm official tributes, but only one real surprise: an unsolicited testimonial to Zangwill's gifts as a popular historian from the ever-amazing D. W. Brogan. Otherwise, a deafening silence; and it has been left to an American publisher to mark the occasion by bringing out the first (and quite possibly, I suppose, the last) full-length critical study of Zangwill's work.* But perhaps this is as it should be, since throughout his career Zangwill tended to have better luck in America than he did at home. The novel which made his name, *Children of the Ghetto*, was originally commissioned by the Jewish Publication Society of America at the instigation of Judge Mayer Sulzberger, who was looking for "a Jewish *Robert Elsmere*"—a counterpart to the most widely discussed English novel of the day, Mrs. Humphry Ward's story about the spiritual crisis of a young Anglican clergyman. In the event, *Children of the Ghetto* turned out somewhat differently, as far more of a social panorama, a portrait of a community. But the outlook for that community, as presented by Zangwill, isn't particularly bright; there is even a suggestion that it may eventually prove to be no more than a halfway house. For the *Elsmere* theme wasn't altogether abandoned. At the heart of the novel stands an oddly assorted group: an Oxford dilettante, a Russian rabbi, and an intelligent girl from the Whitechapel slums. All three are groping for a faith, trying to make sense of being Jewish in the world of late-Victorian London. The results are disheartening, but there is always one obvious way out; and in the last chapter, two of the trio set sail for America.

Zangwill himself knew America well, particularly in connection with his work for ITO, the Territorialist organization. It was at Carnegie Hall that he delivered the notorious speech, "Watchman, What of the Night?," which led to his final break with Weizmann and political Zionism. But America meant much more to Zangwill than a personal platform, or a guaranteed readership. In its unique blend of races and cultures he saw it as humanity's best hope—a faith which received its most rhapsodic expression in his play *The Melting Pot*, originally produced in Washington in 1908. On the first night Theodore Roosevelt shouted across the theater: "That's a great play, Mr. Zangwill!"—a judgment endorsed by few critics at the time, and none since. But if not a great play, it was at any rate a great title; and Zangwill may well be remembered longest for coining an invaluable catchphrase.

Zangwill's admiration for America was passionate and sincere, however starry-eyed. Still, like the Gilbert and Sullivan character, he remained very much an Englishman, and his reputation is irrevocably bound up with the East End of London where he spent his childhood and about which he wrote his best-known book. For over thirty years he was unquestionably *the* literary spokesman for English Jews, the immigrant masses as well as the Anglicized middle-class. His own family were the poorest of the poor (his father was a peddler from a village near Dvinsk, in Latvia), and in *Children of the Ghetto* he set out deliberately to put flesh and blood on that mere statistic of the period, the "pauper alien." As an eighteen-year-old student-teacher at a school in Whitechapel he refused to climb down when the chairman of the governors, Lord Rothschild, openly rebuked him for the "low" realism and the scraps of jargon (i.e., Yiddish) in his first published work, a pamphlet describing the Petticoat Lane market; and for the rest of his career he retained an obstinate loyalty to his origins. As a result, he became a kind of minor folk-hero; and I can testify from personal experience that a full generation after his death, when his books had long been out of print, he was still remembered in the East End as a wit, a controversialist, a tireless spokesman for Jewish causes. I must admit to feeling a certain affection for him which has nothing to do with literature: that intelligent monkey-face with the thick hair and the *pince-nez* almost seems to belong with the family portraits.

YET, A SAD and awkward fact has to be faced. Zangwill was a brave, shrewd, and intensely serious man, but judged by respectable standards he was not a very good writer, and though his personal qualities are apparent from his work he can hardly be said to survive on his literary merits alone. The style—at once florid, wordy, and slightly facetious—is an insurmountable barrier. There is a chapter in *Children of the Ghetto*, for instance, describing a wealthy Jewish family in Kensington giving a Christmas dinner. The social detail sounds convincing, and is often quite amusing, but first of all one has to fight one's way through stuff like this:

> Daintily-embroidered napery, beautiful porcelain, Queen Anne silver, exotic flowers, glittering glass, soft rosy light, creamy expanses of

* *Israel Zangwill: A Study*, by Maurice Wohlgelernter, Columbia University Press, 344 pp., $7.50.

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shirt front, elegant low-necked dresses—all the conventional accompaniments of Occidental gastronomy.

Zangwill might have done better if there had been a more distinguished literary tradition directly at hand, but as it was he began his writing career in the world of the sentimental cockney journalism of the 1880's: the best-known of his early literary friends was Jerome K. Jerome of *Three Men in a Boat*. In such an atmosphere there was very little inducement to think hard about the art of the novel, and the style of *Children of the Ghetto* is matched by the plot, a loose melodramatic affair full of "strong" situations and wild coincidences.

It says much for Zangwill's seriousness of purpose that the book is nevertheless still worth reading as a slice of social history, and that for all the staginess it has an underlying authenticity. Zangwill knew his raw material through and through, and if his characters are generally overdrawn or over-simplified they are almost never travestied out of existence. The range is much wider, too, than anyone knowing of the book only through hearsay would be led to suppose: it encompasses West End as well as East End, early Zionism as well as the *Shulchan Aruch*, stockbrokers as well as sweatshop laborers. Some of the characters are taken straight from life, others are representative types; and there is a fair stab at explaining customs and attitudes which even well-educated English novel-readers of the day must have found almost totally unintelligible. The general tone is, of course, sympathetic, but certainly not sugary: there is far more satire and far less idealization than in, say, the Jewish parts of *Daniel Deronda*. As a picture of Jewish life in London during the period of the mass-immigrations from Eastern Europe it is unrivaled, and, indeed, unique, for only fleeting and often unfriendly glimpses are to be found in the work of other English writers of the period. Those who doubt that Zangwill was performing an important service in trying to dispel mysteries should remind themselves of the prejudice against which he had to contend by looking up a novel like Hilaire Belloc's *A Change in the Cabinet*, where the hero inadvertently strays into the East End, and the same area as the one described in the first half of *Children of the Ghetto* is presented as a kind of sinister bedlam.

At this hour of the day the only satisfactory study of Zangwill which it is possible to imagine is one which begins by frankly acknowledging his literary deficiencies, and concentrates on his personality and historical significance. Unfortunately Rabbi Wohlgelernter, though he doesn't make any spectacular claims for Zangwill's novels and plays, never really grapples with the problem. His book proceeds at a dutiful Ph.D. plod—"What precisely is the comic spirit? In his highly revealing *Essay on Comedy* Meredith tells us . . ."—and he spends more time placing Zangwill in the context of minor turn-of-the-century naturalistic novelists such as Richard Whiteing and Arthur Morrison than in following up topics which one would otherwise have supposed were of more immediate interest to a teacher at Yeshiva University. There is only the barest reference to Zangwill's translations of Solomon Ibn Gabirol, for instance, and nothing about his other translations from the prayer-book (no great shakes as poetry, needless to say, but worth a glance as curiosities: I remember how impressed I was as a child by the skill with which Zangwill managed to preserve both the complicated rhyme-scheme and the acrostic pattern in his version of *Omnam Ken*).

The only previous book on Zangwill, Joseph Leftwich's biography, is badly organized and too close to its subject, but I prefer it to Rabbi Wohlgelernter's: it is more informative, and written with much greater warmth. What Rabbi Wohlgelernter does provide is a clear and methodical summary of all Zangwill's major works. It is useful to have such a record available, but on the basis of these descriptions (which I have no doubt are competent) nothing will induce me to look at the bulk of Zangwill's output. His plays and novels sound like classic instances of good sentiments making bad literature. For the most part they appear to be heavy-handed and lifeless allegories advocating humanism, idealism, pacifism, and love, with a dash of 19th-century-style nationalism. The prevailing atmosphere can be gauged from one play, *The Next Religion*, where the last act takes place in a temple with stained-glass windows showing three saints of the "next religion": Emerson, Mazzini, and Swinburne.

ALL THIS IS as dead as mutton today, but no one could doubt that Zangwill was in earnest when he wrote; in fact his final efforts to get his plays produced ruined his health and finances, and hastened his death. In a recent article in COMMENTARY* Dan Jacobson characterized Zangwill the novelist as "a purveyor of exotica." In reality he was more ambitious than that would suggest, but it might have been better for him if he had stuck to his exotica: at least he would have been cultivating the territory which he knew best. As it is, to look at a list of his works is to be struck by how few of them are on Jewish themes. He began with comic novels like *The Celibates' Club*, and ended with his plays: the four or five "ghetto" books (with one minor exception) were written in his late twenties and early thirties, but though they alone keep his reputation alive, in a sense they represent a detour. For whatever his other loyalties, from first to last the main drive behind his career was to turn himself into a successful English man of letters, and by and large he man-

* "Jewish Writing in England," May 1964.

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aged to conform to the pattern of his period, right down to the olde-worlde Sussex village where he spent the last twenty years of his life.

Zangwill was in fact far less caught up in Jewish culture, and far more ambivalent about being a Jew, than the popular legend suggests. He was a man of cosmopolitan breadth (among his own books his particular favorite was a set of travel sketches, *Italian Fantasies*), but there is nothing in his work to indicate that he was a contemporary of either Bialik or Sholem Aleichem. Nor was he religious, except in the cloudy terms of "the next religion." His wife was non-Jewish (it was an exceptionally happy marriage, incidentally), and his children were not given a Jewish upbringing. Yet he tended to think that religion was the only possible justification for Jewish separatism—and he made it clear that by religion he meant "not a seat in a synagogue and a grave in a Jewish cemetery, but a faith like that which made our fathers sit Shivah for faithless children." In one of his last speeches he quoted Charles Lamb: "Why keep up a form of separation when the life of it is dead?"

This was a question to which Zangwill, like countless other newly emancipated Jews, was unable to find a satisfactory answer. Liberated once and for all from traditional Orthodoxy, he was nevertheless anxious to maintain some kind of cultural continuity (of a positive kind, as opposed to a mere defensive reaction to anti-Semitism). As a result, his attitude was a mass of inconsistencies. Nothing could altogether uproot the tenderness and respect which he felt for the religion of his childhood, yet there were times when the whole subject clearly gave him claustrophobia, and he wished he could escape from it for good. He was less explicit about this than he was when the opposite mood was on him, and he spoke about preserving Jewish values, but the urge to escape underlies much of his work. As a political philosophy, the internationalism of his plays is hopelessly vague; in practice it means assimilation. (The hero of *The Melting Pot*, who foreshadows the ideal world-citizen of the future, is described as "a handsome youth of the finest Russo-Jewish type," and as a further guarantee that he is basically a sound chap he is given the Sephardic-sounding name of David Quixano.) At one moment Judaism is seen as a priceless heritage, at the next as a millstone round the modern Jew's neck.

A COMMON enough conflict over the past hundred and fifty years; in Zangwill's case it was doubtless intensified by the example of his parents. His father, whom he deeply admired, was a model of traditional piety; his mother, whom he is supposed to have taken after in character, was a hard-headed "pagan" who had no patience with her husband's ineffectualness in worldly matters, and eventually refused to accompany him when he set out to end his days in Jerusalem. To a considerable extent the son can be seen as living out the parents' conflict; and if he often found this oppressive, it also gave him his true subject as a writer. But unfortunately it was a subject which generally proved too much for him. Only once did he really come to grips with it—in *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, which is his most rewarding book (of those I have read, at least), and still deserves to be kept in circulation.

Dreamers of the Ghetto consists of a series of vivid biographical sketches of notable figures from the middle ages to Zangwill's own day. It is an excellent introduction to Jewish history for an imaginative child, doing the same kind of job Kipling's Puck of Pook's Hill books do for English history. But it also has a unity and depth which only the adult reader is likely to grasp. All the "dreamers"—and they range from Uriel Acosta and Solomon Maimon to Heine and Lassalle—are rebels who are unable to find peace either inside or outside the ghetto. The dream is of "the first emancipation"; and as the subtitle of the book makes clear, in Zangwill's eyes it is "a dream which has not come true." There is a vein of pessimism, indeed anguish, running through these stories which redeems the usual flowery style; one sees how it was possible for the French poet André Spire to feel that the course of his entire life had been changed by reading them, and that they had been enough in themselves to set him on the path from assimilation to Zionism.

Near the end of *Dreamers of the Ghetto* there is an account of the First Zionist Congress at Basel, which had been held only some two years previously. By including the Zionist idea in the book there is an implication that it, too, is yet another dream destined not to come true. But Zangwill had actually been won over by Herzl at their first meeting, one foggy evening in 1895 at his house in the North London suburb of Kilburn, and he was the most influential of Herzl's early English supporters. He was as inconsistent in his attitude to Zionism, however, as he was to everything else Jewish. As long as Herzl was alive he remained loyal to the official movement; but immediately after Herzl's death came the final split over the Uganda scheme and the formation of ITO. Zangwill's wisdom in breaking away from the main body of Zionism is open to question, but the whole debate now looks very remote, since in the end, after twenty years of fruitless investigations in Cyrenaica, Angola, and elsewhere, Territorialism came to nothing. This does not necessarily prove that Zangwill was wrong, of course. He foresaw trouble with the Arabs long before most of his colleagues; and who knows how many lives might have been saved if he had succeeded in establishing the *Nachtasyl*, the temporary refuge which he regarded as a more urgent necessity than the resettlement of Palestine? For he was severely practical in his approach to Zionism, and convinced that any port would serve in the gathering storm.

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He had a strong premonition of calamities to come, even if he saw the chief source of danger—not unreasonably—as Czarist Russia rather than Germany. Rabbi Wohlgelernter quotes a striking passage (from *Ghetto Comedies*!) about a town where attempts to organize Jewish self-defense against a pogrom have failed:

> When the bombardment was over the peace of the devil lay over the ghetto of Milovka. Silent were all the fiery orators of all the letters of the alphabet; silent the Polish patriots and the lovers of Zion and the lovers of mankind; silent the bourgeois and the philosophers, the timber-merchants and the horse-dealers, the bankers and the Bundists, silent the Socialists and the Democrats; silent even the burly censor, and the careless Karaite, and the cheerful Chassid; silent the landlord and his revolutionary infant in their fortified cellar; silent the Rabbi in his study, and the crowds in the market-place.

This was the vision which lay behind Zangwill's political work; and if Territorialism eventually proved a lost cause, it was not an unworthy one. Zangwill can also take most of the credit for the one successful offshoot of Territorialism, the Galveston Project, which brought several thousand European refugees across the Atlantic.

In the end, Zangwill's importance lies outside literature: one honors the writer, and puts aside his books. Yet if his example continues to haunt one, it is as something more than a public worthy or a valuable source for the social historian. He was ultimately a tragic figure: a wanderer between two worlds, unable to give lasting expression to his dilemma. Ironically, the only work of art which does justice to him is by another man: the wonderful portrait by Walter Sickert, which shows a Zangwill somber, thoughtful, and calm. Here alone, I think, we can see into the depths at which we can do no more than guess in Zangwill's own work.

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WAS LENIN NECESSARY?

Leonard Schapiro

IT IS A hundred years since Communism became a practical aim, and nearly fifty years since the October revolution in Russia claimed to be putting that aim into practice. Now, the end of Khrushchev's rule has served to underline the distance which separates us from the Russian revolution and from Lenin. The men who have, for the time being, taken over are too young even to remember the revolution. A younger generation still will before long be standing on the threshold of power. In the developed Western world, including the Soviet Union, Communism seems already to have begun declining—thus setting Lenin's version of Marx in its proper perspective, as a ruthless and wasteful method of rapidly industrializing backward countries. This, then, is a good moment to stand back and reassess the historical Lenin, and to detach him from the mythological figure whom Soviet leaders, for reasons of practical politics, seek to project on the world in an effort to salvage their own legitimacy. Fortunately, the materials for such a reassessment are now at hand. Three biographies of Lenin have recently appeared, together with an English translation of a most illuminating volume of memoirs which was first published a few years ago.* Along with Bertram Wolfe's and David Shub's fine pioneer works, both of which appeared in 1948, and the invaluable articles and memoirs of the late N. V. Volsky (Valentinov), these new books provide the serious reader with a fair body of evidence on which to base a careful judgment of Lenin's real stature.

There seem to me to be at least three reasons why the time has come—for those of us who are free to do so—to attempt this reassessment of the man who more than any other has affected the course of world history since the end of the First World War. In the first place, the enormous fascination which Lenin exercised over intellectuals everywhere after 1918, even over his political opponents, no longer obtains. Lenin in the 20's symbolized many things to many people. He was the artificer of a new society which still held out the hope that, when once the birth pangs were over, it would justify itself by its justice and virtue. He was the man who had led a successful and popular socialist revolution which, unlike all previous revolutions, had not ended up in a new form of bourgeois domination. Above all, he was the hard, logical, ruthless master of scientific political surgery who did not fall or falter before the traditional enemies of sloth, sentimentality, and romantic illusion. It was pre-eminently in this guise that he fascinated the Russian intellectuals, friends and foes alike. Ever since Chernyshevsky's Rakhmetov and Turgenev's Bazarov in the early 1860's had stirred the imagination of the Russian radicals, they had been unconsciously waiting, as for the Messiah, for just such a figure as Lenin. (The most perspicacious of the radicals of the 60's, Pisarev, had understood that even the sympathies of the Westernizing liberal Turgenev lay with Bazarov, and not with the old order which Bazarov was dedicated to deny.) Small wonder, then, that so many of the radicals should have been slow to reject Lenin, however much his actions may have

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* *Impressions of Lenin*, by Angelica Balabanoff, Introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe, University of Michigan Press, 152 pp., $5.00; *The Life of Lenin*, by Louis Fischer, Harper & Row, 703 pp., $10.00; *The Life and Death of Lenin*, by Robert Payne, Simon & Schuster, 672 pp., $8.50; and *Lenin: The Compulsive Revolutionary*, by Stefan T. Possony, Regnery, 418 pp., $7.95.

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repelled them. Do the ends justify the means? Angelica Balabanoff, a rare exception among that generation of revolutionaries, had no doubts at all on this issue—she was among the first of Lenin's one-time supporters to reject him after the Revolution, precisely because she did not believe that socialism could be brought about by the kind of means that Lenin never scrupled to employ. (She was not, of course, the very first to do so: Rosa Luxemburg had preceded her and earlier still there had been Martov, who broke with Lenin on precisely this issue at the Second Congress of the Russian party in 1903—though none of the three most recent biographers of Lenin seems to be alive to this fact.)

The second reason why the time is ripe for a reassessment of Lenin is the progress which has been made during the past two decades in the study of the history of the Russian revolutionary movement. Even before the advent of the Soviet school of falsification, the early Bolsheviks had succeeded to a considerable extent in projecting their own, quite inaccurate, version of the Party's role in the revolution to the outside world. Many myths of Bolshevik hagiography were—and some still are—enshrined as facts in historical works produced outside of Russia, until they were for the most part dislodged by the patient researches of a handful of scholars (who took the momentous step of going back to the sources, instead of repeating what their predecessors had written). Professor Stefan Possony's new book is very much in this category. Opinions may legitimately differ as to whether his final judgment on Lenin is really all that should be recorded of him: "In retrospect, the best that can be said about V. I. Lenin is that, had he recovered [from his last illness] he would have been purged by J. V. Stalin." But there can be no doubt that Possony's researches into hitherto unexplored police archives are of great value in illuminating the lesser known sides of Lenin's clandestine activities. Indeed, one would now have to be either very naïve or politically blind not to accept the fact that Lenin was totally ruthless in his political methods, ready to accept help from any source whatever when it served his purpose, and completely uninhibited by ties of friendship or ordinary standards of morality. He was quite open about all this in private conversation, and he apparently really believed that the nature of the means was immaterial so long as they advanced his revolutionary objectives. The other side of the coin was that he could not be swayed by personal vanity or by considerations of material benefit to himself. What motivated him throughout his active life was an unshakeable conviction that he was right, that everyone who disagreed with him was wrong, and that therefore his own continuation in power was essential to the cause. But if one accepts these facts about Lenin's character, as I think every honest historian now must, one is still left with the problem of determining Lenin's stature in its proper historical perspective.

THIS LEADS to the third, and, I think, the most important reason for a re-examination of the traditional image of Lenin at this particular time. The most widely accepted part of the traditional story, the part not usually challenged even by critics of Lenin and of Bolshevism, maintains that his leadership and victory in 1917 were historical necessities. The chaos, the war, the inexperience and irresoluteness of the Provisional Government, the weakness of the Socialist Revolutionaries, the progressive emaciation of the Menshevik doctrine —all these and many more factors can be adduced in support of the argument that some such solution as Lenin's was unavoidable. None of the recent biographers, to be sure, accepts this assumption in so many words, but neither does any of them really get beyond showing the extent to which Lenin's ruthless determination was responsible for his victory. Of this, of course, there can be little doubt—the very novelty of his revolutionary technique in itself confounded his opponents. But I think that if one is to get a proper sense of Lenin's true stature in history, one has to go further and ask what would have happened had there been no Lenin. The answer, obviously, is that there would have been no Bolshevik revolution. Even Trotsky admitted as much, though a more recent Marxist historian, Isaac Deutscher, has taken him severely to task for surrendering to such an un-Marxist view of history. But would Russia, or indeed the cause of socialism in Russia, have been worse off? I wonder. Certainly there would have been a period of chaos and ignominious defeat by the Germans; but was there not also chaos enough—and the disaster of Brest-Litovsk—under Lenin's leadership? And then? The Allied victory over Germany would have rescued Russia, Lenin or no Lenin. A long period of further chaos, inefficiency, political confusion would have followed; but would that have been worse than Stalin's regime? Furthermore, had there been no Lenin, two factors might have operated to permit the eventual emergence of some kind of democratic regime, under which the Russians could have used their natural talents to spur the process of industrialization inaugurated by Witte in the 1890's. For without Lenin on the scene, the chances of agreement between the different parties, groups, and classes would have been infinitely greater—Lenin's main energies were indeed devoted to preventing such agreement. And without Bolshevism (and its direct heir, Stalinism) there would have been every possibility of financial support for the industrial development of a nascently democratic Russia from the other countries of Europe and from the United States.

Without Lenin, however, would there not have been a counter-revolution? I am not aware of any evidence that counter-revolution, in the true sense

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of a restoration of the monarchy and the landlords, was ever much more than a convenient bogy. The monarchy had lost virtually all support within days after its collapse. The defeat of Kornilov owed nothing to the Bolsheviks, and everything to the common soldiers of the army, who hated their officers and were generally revolutionary rather than specifically Bolshevik. If a civil war had ensued even without a Bolshevik seizure of power (and it is far from certain that one would have), the White side would have foundered, as it in fact did founder, on the determination of the peasants not to see the landlords back again.

Speculations such as these are the kind of "might have beens" which incur Mr. E. H. Carr's contemptuous strictures as useless parlor games. Yet if one fails to raise such speculations, one tends to be hypnotized into accepting (as, of course, Mr. Carr accepts) Lenin's victory as predestined, inevitable, and even desirable. Given the character of Lenin and the shortcomings of his opponents, the victory really was "inevitable," but recognizing that does not get us very far. The question that must be asked is what did this "compulsive revolutionary" achieve for his country that could not have been better achieved without him? Khrushchev, who claimed to be restoring Leninism, jettisoned some of the most violent features of Stalinism, and made Soviet life more tolerable by tempering doctrine with occasional flashes of common sense. It may be that his successors will increase the dose of sense and still further reduce the doctrine; perhaps they will even make inroads on Leninism in the interests of material welfare and progress. Perhaps state capitalism will some day flourish in the USSR without the corruption, the inefficiency, the injustice, and the inequality which characterize it at present. Will this constitute a justification of Lenin's obsessive conviction in 1917 that only his particular type of regime would do?

No one can dispute Lenin's genius as a revolutionary. But revolution is not an end in itself (though for much of his life Lenin behaved as if he believed it was; in 1917 his motto, borrowed from Napoleon, was: *on s'engage et puis on voit*). Thus, if we are to assess Lenin's place as the architect of his country's future, we must also assess his capacity for statesmanship. As events turned out —and as so many of Lenin's opponents had predicted—there was little scope for statesmanship at first. All energies had to be devoted to rescuing Russia from the catastrophic mess into which the country was plunged by the attempt to introduce extreme socialism all at once, and to the overriding problems which faced a small, increasingly unpopular minority determined to preserve its monopoly of power. There was, however, a chance for true statesmanship at the end of the civil war, when, if only Lenin had been willing to surmount his dogmatic insistence on keeping power exclusively in the hands of his own party, he might have been able to unite all the socialist and radical parties in the work of reconstruction. This he failed to do. The measures adopted at the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921, designed as they were to strengthen the hold of the Communist party machine over the country and over its own dissidents, created the apparatus which Stalin took over and used for his own terrible ends. One cannot escape the conclusion that a greater statesman would have foreseen the consequences of such a policy, and would not have sacrificed all to doctrine, or to obsession with power, as Lenin did in 1921.

And yet perhaps Lenin did finally sense something of his tragic failure as a statesman. The last period of his life, the years 1922 and 1923, when he was struck down by the disease which was to prove fatal, can still only be discerned in dim outline. It is no fault of his latest biographers that they have not been able to throw much new light on these enigmatic last years. A full picture will only become possible if the Soviet archives are ever opened, or if some new change in the country's political line requires the publication of more of the documents which surely still survive, buried deep in the party's most secret vaults.

The little that we do know is enough to indicate that the dying man, incapable of more than sporadic activity (and, of course, obstructed, snubbed, ignored, and side-stepped by the hatchet-men contending for the succession), was engaged in rethinking his whole position. Much has been made, for political reasons, of Lenin's so-called Testament with its criticism of Stalin and its suggestions for reforming the state and party apparatus. The importance of both seems to me to have been much exaggerated. Lenin perceived some of the inordinate personal ambition of Stalin, but he did not, so far as we know, ever realize that the nature of the whole system he himself had created was such as to make it virtually certain that any man in the position of top secretary of the party could assume dictatorship of the country. As for the reforms, the game of reshuffling the pieces has now been going on for forty-seven years, to the clear benefit neither of democracy nor administrative efficiency. What Lenin did not see, or at any rate did not say, was that the vice of the system which he had set up lay precisely in the fact that an autocratic party, itself autocratically run, would be responsible to no one and controlled by no one. But here a caveat must be entered. Had Lenin ever said or written anything so subversive of the whole basis of past and present party rule, there can be little doubt that no effort would have been spared by his successors to erase all trace of such views. Even Lenin's somewhat crazy suggestion for a super-inspectorate composed entirely of proletarian saints was in his lifetime very nearly kept out of *Pravda* by his admiring disciples. The enigma of Lenin's last years persists, and is likely to for some time.

This question—did Lenin ever see where the

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real vice of his system lay?—seems to me much more intriguing than the question of whether he was poisoned by Stalin. Both Mr. Payne and Mr. Fischer devote some space to this problem; the former thinks he was poisoned, the latter thinks he was not. The evidence seems pretty slender at best; in any case, whether helped along by Stalin or not, Lenin could not long have survived the illness of which he died. The last inner thoughts of the man still present the more fascinating problem.

We get a glimpse of these thoughts in some of his last writings, especially "On Co-operation." Here, at long last, is Lenin's virtual recognition that by attempting a revolution in a country which had not yet attained the necessary social development, he had stood Marxist theory on its head. Now, argues Lenin, with power firmly in the hands of the "proletariat" (by which he meant, as always, the party), a long period of class peace is needed for the peasants to attain the social consciousness required for socialism. NEP was the practical embodiment of his view. Who can tell whether—but for Stalin's boundless ambition and insane power-lust—NEP might not have become the foundation for a more normal course of political and economic development?

But so far as Lenin himself was concerned, his moment of political wisdom had come too late. We can only do our best to judge him in the light of what he achieved and failed to achieve. I attempted to do this some ten years ago. Since then both praise and denigration of him have poured forth, along with the more sober and balanced assessment of his latest biographers, but I see no reason to alter my judgment. He was the greatest revolutionary of all times—but he was not a statesman. And revolution without statesmanship to guide its aftermath can bring nothing but disaster to those who are fated to live through that aftermath.

LEONARD SCHAPIRO, *a British scholar, is an expert on Russian government and politics. His books include* The Origins of the Communist Autocracy *(1956) and the definitive study,* The Communist Party of the Soviet Union *(1959).*

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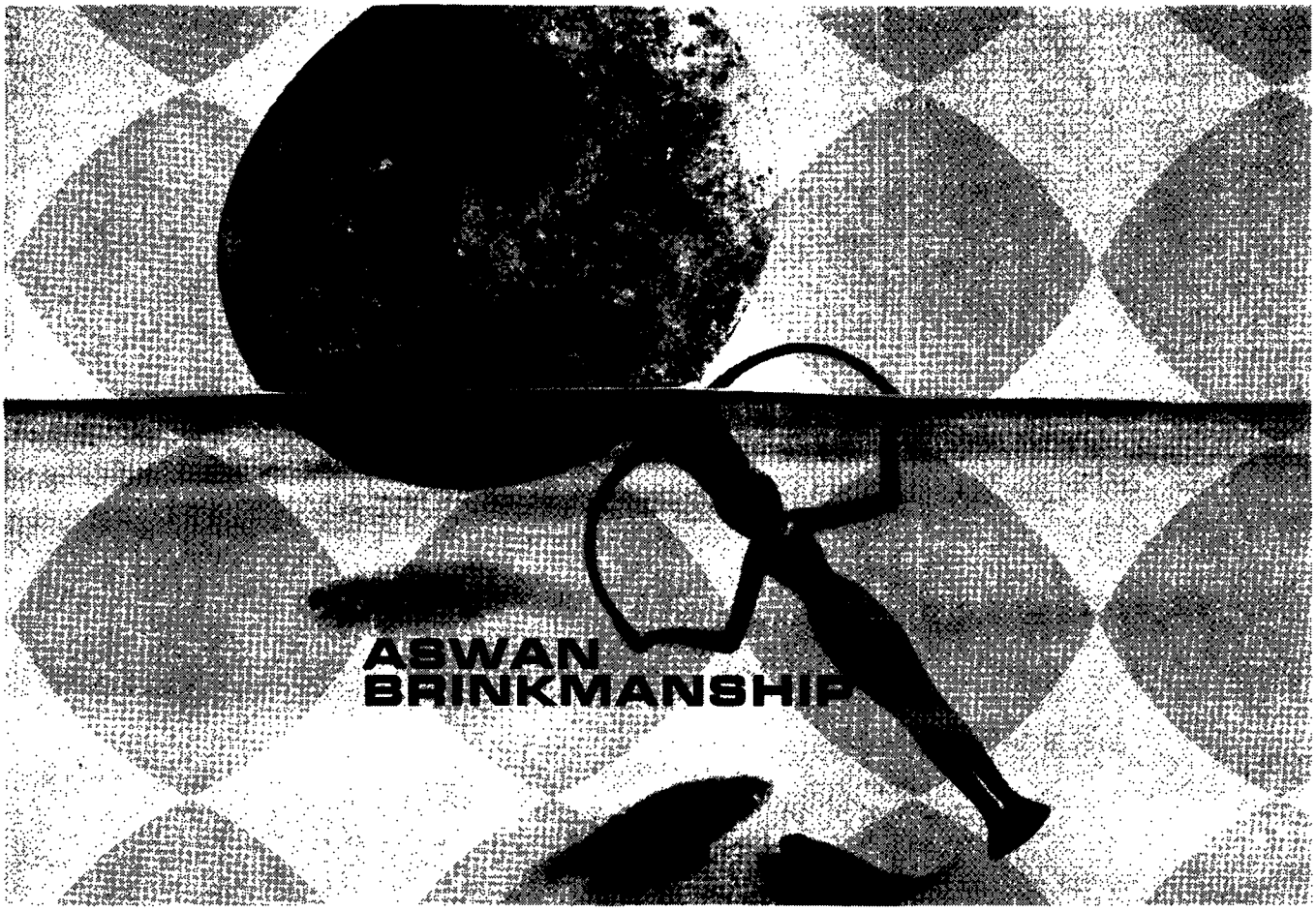

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NAPOLEON ST. AND AFTER

HERZOG. By SAUL BELLOW. *Viking. 341 pp. $5.75.*

Reviewed by
THEODORE SOLOTAROFF

Herzog is a lovely book, so crammed with wit and thoughtfulness and feeling that one can go on reading it over and over. So I have been doing, off and on, for the past three months. I am prepared to say that its interest is inexhaustible—one of the tests of major literature. However, I am also prepared to say that it is much easier and possibly more rewarding to re-read *Herzog* than to try to hold it together in your mind. Its principle of composition is that of overflow: Bellow's consciousness of life, much of it no doubt his life, caught at the flood, with the form of the novel kept wide open to receive it. There is an action that develops briefly in the middle but its purpose is mainly to effect a transition in thought and feeling, and the meaning of the book remains embedded for the most part in Herzog's memories, reveries, and especially in his letters to the world which have only a fragmentary connection to one another. On the other hand, the writing is so clear, the sensibility of Herzog is so amazingly visible, the bearings of his situation are so graphically drawn, that one should be able to say something more significant than "Go read it," which by now most COMMENTARY subscribers probably have.

The trouble, of course, is Herzog himself. He is one of those European-type intellectuals who teach at the New School in New York or the Committee on Social Thought in Chicago (where Bellow is currently employed), whose minds are like the Mafia—interests everywhere. Then, too, he is a cuckold, and there is nothing like that to make a man think strange obsessive thoughts. But even so, what do Herzog's grievances have to do with "the plebeian stage of evolutionary self-awareness," or with "the fact that so much of 'value' has been absorbed by technology itself," or with "what Heidegger calls the second Fall of Man into the quotidian or ordinary."?

Well, to make a start, Herzog can be viewed as a high-class version of Bellow's other recent heroes: Tommy Wilhelm of *Seize the Day*, Eugene Henderson of *Henderson the Rain King*, and Philip Bummidge of the play, *The Last Analysis*. They are all trying to recover from a crisis of middle age in which a man is overwhelmed by a happening that makes a mockery of his settled contrivances and assurances and that testifies once and for all to the previous mismanagement of his life. Wilhelm, a salesman, loses his job; Henderson, whose vocation has been to exercise his powerful vitality, is seized by the dread of his imminent death; Bummidge, the TV comic, can no longer stand his own jokes; Herzog, student of Romanticism and apostle of "heart," has been undone by his wife's love affair with his best friend. All four men are impulsive, self-dramatizing types who are impatient with their adversities. What King Dahfu says of Henderson is no less true of the others: "Everything about you . . . cries out 'Salvation, Salvation. What shall I do? What must I do? At once. What will become of me?' " Still, they *have* laid waste their powers and each is near the end of his emotional tether. The principal problem of Bellow's fiction, stated in *Dangling Man*, his first novel, as "How is a good man to live?" has thus come down to the more specific and desperate question stated in *The Last Analysis* as how is a middle-aged failure to be "reborn from an empty heart?"

Willy nilly, then, all these later heroes of Bellow are gluttons for suffering—for what suffers is still alive and still has the possibility of renewal. They are all also trying to reach the deeper sources of grief and impulse, to reconstitute the past in order to shed it, to clear away the cultural conditioning that has deflected them from a simple understanding of their desires. Herzog's case, however, is a much more complicated one. He has so many roles and images and is so divided among them that simplicity is impossible. A child of the immigrant ghetto, to which his heart is still tied, he has written his first and only book on *Romanticism and Christianity*. A bookish, urban type, he has tried to turn himself into a New England country squire. A scholar, a foot-loose intellectual, a lover of fancy women, he is also a dutiful man around the house and a patient caretaker of his wife's neurosis. No wonder he has problems of identity. He is a Romantic who sets great store by "the heart" —a term that is constantly on his mind—but he is also a Rationalist who has more principles of ethics than Spinoza. His innocence is no less phenomenal than his sophistication. How can a man who is an expert student of his own character turn over his wife's diaphragm to his best friend? How can he then bring the friend with them to Chicago and find him a job, consult him about his wife's moods, finally be booted out and supplanted, and still not seriously suspect? No wonder Herzog wishes to give up "the crushing burden of self-development." No wonder the time for a serious reckoning has come.

THE PROBLEM, though, is not only that Herzog has to come to terms with his high-minded and tender-hearted childishness. He also conceives himself to be a representative contemporary individual as well as a devoted humanist whose breakdown has a general significance. For Gersbach and Madeleine are not alone in cheating and degrading him, of robbing him of his belief in "faithfulness, generosity, sacred quality." There are his lawyer and his analyst, both of whom exploited him in bad faith and in their re-

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spective and typically modern styles of contempt for human nature. There are his more impersonal enemies such as the politicians and nuclear gamesmen who hold his life in their callous hands and increase his private citizen's feeling of impotency and rage by building missile sites on public beaches and making plans to blow up the polar ice caps with hydrogen bombs to get at their oil deposits. There is the huge, amorphous, unreal public life itself that dispenses freedom without content, culture without nourishment, the cynicism of Madison Avenue and the "potato love" of Eisenhower. Herzog's angry sense of grievance from his cuckoldry rises and spreads in all directions as he busily scribbles his dispatches of protest to a society and an age that has less and less room, use, and respect for the traditions of humane and personal being, for individuals like Herzog.

Though Herzog realizes that many of his ideas about the heart and its prerogatives are as hapless and mistaken as his life has been, he wants to continue to believe in something better than the grimy pseudo-realism of the new "mass men"—people like his lawyer, Himmelstein, to whom all men are whores, all truth is facts, and all facts are dirty. Nor does he wish to fall back into the malarial pessimism of the Wasteland view, "the cheap mental stimulants of Alienation, the cant and rant of pipsqueaks about Inauthenticity and Forlornness," the "shivery games" people today play with themselves in advocating apocalyptic views, crisis ethics, the theology of dread. "I can't accept this foolish dreariness," writes Herzog to his friend Shapiro who has apparently produced another fastidious treatise on the decline of the West, the nightmare of history, the death of God, the pathology of culture, etc. "We are talking about the whole life of mankind. The subject is too great, too deep for such weakness, cowardice."

However, the tone of Herzog's protest is unsteady; he lacks confidence. He recognizes that the facts of contemporary history and society are dead against the humanists. War and genocide have reduced the sacredness of the individual life, the significance of the civilizing virtues to a hideous mockery ("Limitless massacre!" Herzog reminds himself. "I never understood it, did I, because it was not compatible with my aims.") Then there is the other side of the coin: the revolutions of population growth and technology, the rapid transformations of culture and value that are necessary to help more people live a little better on this planet: "Would you deny them the right to exist? Would you ask them to labor and go hungry while you enjoyed delicious old-fashioned Values? You yourself are a child of this mass and a brother to all the rest. Or else an ingrate, dilettante, idiot." "A merely aesthetic critique of modern history?" he rages against Shapiro. "You are too intelligent for this. You inherited rich blood. Your father peddled apples."

HOWEVER REPRESENTATIVE Herzog's crisis of belief may be, it sheds banality and takes on force only through being an expression of character and not merely a series of constructs to explain his failure as a man. Most of his ideas are too sketchy in any event to stand on their own. Herzog cannot write sustained discussions while he is supposed to be cracking up, though one wonders if Bellow himself doesn't want to have it both ways—to portray the "eager, grieving, fantastic, dangerous, crazed and to the point of death, 'comical'" Herzog, who will eventually be rushing around Chicago with murder in his eye and a gun wrapped in old rubles, and at the same time to provide an important if fragmentary set of notes toward the definition of post-modern culture. He is indulgent toward Herzog's habit of broad speculation as he is toward nothing else about him, and the novel tends to become cluttered with "brilliant" thoughts at the general expense of narrative power and clarity. Be that as it may, one of Herzog's ideas is that "Romanticism is the form taken by plebeian envy in modern Europe." I don't think that this is true generally, but it is true of Herzog. He comes directly from the one segment of the formerly repressed masses who immediately set about to possess the wealth, manners, and cultural heritage of the

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elite. Bred in Herzog's bones is the romanticism of the Emancipation: it connects the deluded "Graf Pototsky of the Berkshires," as he calls himself, to the somewhat presumptuous scholar trying to crack and revise Hegel's "Law of the Heart." The ground of his complexity, Herzog's Jewishness, is also what finally connects the gifted analysand to the blind husband, or the comic victim with his "immoderate, heart-flooded way" to the gaunt and earnest seeker after Otherness. It enters into his grandiose conceptions of himself and into his stinging self-irony; it is the source of his moral sentimentality, on the one side, and of his vestiges of sternness with himself, on the other.

HERZOG'S Jewishness is the one thing about him that goes deeper than his ideas about his life and so is seldom discussed as such. It emerges solidly, naturally, authentically, from the family experiences that he remembers so vividly in the section of the novel that appeared in COMMENTARY last July, and functions not as another construct but as the main province of his temperament. Herzog's prototype is his improvident father, the princely timid bootlegger, who rushed around town calculating "percentages at high speeds," much as Herzog rushed around in his "delirious" profession of intellectual history, making his quick, summary formulations and judgments, usually to much the same profit that his father earned. He is also the disciple of his tender, unworldly, and not very honest mother. In Montreal, he grew up on Napoleon Street—a name not idly chosen by Bellow—in an ambience beautifully encapsulated by the song the tragic family boarder sang when he returned from his nightly drunk, his wife and children having been swept away forever in the Russian Revolution:

Al tastir ponecho mimeni
I'm broke without a penny.
Do not hide Thy countenance from us
Vich nobody can deny.

In the humor of Ravitch's song, there is something not a little crazy, with its dizzying leap across the ages, the desperate irony of its transitions from the sacred to the profane, the old world to the new, its feeling of cosmic loss and contactlessness which is both acknowledged and spoofed in the last line. Remembering Napoleon Street, "the bootlegger's boys reciting ancient prayers," Herzog thinks—"Here was a wider range of human feelings than he had ever again been able to find." And one is tempted to add, "Yes, and what gaps between them." Ravitch's profound division of consciousness bespeaks a culture in which all things are alienated from themselves and irony takes on the status of an ontological principle. This is the famous Jewish marginality that is currently being so much exploited and trivialized. However, it is the real thing in *Herzog* and he is its product.

The Herzogs have standards of "heart," and Moses has been one of those "young Jews brought up on moral principles as Victorian ladies were on pianoforte and needlepoint." All of which has helped him to know a great deal about life and to understand very little: the narcissism of his ambitiousness and the narcissism of his unworldliness are endlessly in conflict. Just as he is a natural for a profession in which "the main instrument is your opinion of yourself," so his inner life is regularly flooded by the self-enclosing emotional system of the ghetto, in which so much feeling circulates within the family, so little flows out to the bleak and hostile and corrupting world. Thus, though Herzog lives in the world, he has been able to spare himself real understanding of the vast range of human experience that exists outside his self-regarding categories. Similarly, his morality has remained one based on evasion and repression. It is only when he strays into a criminal courtroom and suddenly comes up against genuine sordidness and evil that he begins to realize how insulated he has been by his feelings, not only against the life of the drug addict or the child murderer that is revealed to him but also against his own balked desires that rise up in him as an evil taste in the mouth.

The jolt in the New York courtroom is followed by the automobile accident in Chicago in which Herzog almost kills himself and his

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little girl and is apprehended by the police for carrying his useless gun. These are the blows by which truth generally comes in Bellow's fiction. The first sharply teaches Herzog the limits and shallowness of his "essential humanity" in the face of what is merely another routine day for a criminal judge. The second brings him back from his dangerous preoccupations with his indignities, his rights, his need for justice. Returning to his abandoned country house and living amid the owls and butterflies and field mice, Herzog finally begins to move toward simplicity: a proper estimate of the interest of one small and ailing Self against the claims of all that there is in this world that is not Moses Elkanah Herzog; also a due respect for the mystery of experience that does not yield to explanations, much less to a "good five-cent synthesis." "Everything of intensest significance," he writes to God. "Especially if divested of me." Though Herzog ends the novel where he began it, flat on his back, he has come a distance in learning to keep still, to lay off his vanity, and to let his heart fill of its own accord.

THE ELEGIAC prose of the closing section is so naturally luminous and moving that one tends to overlook the fact that it is quietly burying most of the issues that earlier had been raised in connection with Herzog's relations to society. At the end, he rests more firmly and spiritually in his passivity, but it is still passivity. He has taken Adlai Stevenson, among others, to task for being one of those "who think a good deal and effect nothing," but one wonders what Herzog is now able to effect besides another marriage to a woman lavish in all things, including advice on how he should live. True, he has begun to believe in the God of his friend Nachman and of his fathers, but isn't he merely availing himself of the solace of faith without committing himself to its substance? "I am pretty well satisfied to be, to be just as it is willed," says Herzog. One wonders what will happen when the trees of Ludeyville turn bare and the woods fill with mud. God requires more desire than Herzog has to give; so far he hasn't abandoned the old Self but merely found a healing illusion of having done so.

I suspect that the same discursive looseness of structure that has allowed Bellow to indulge his flair for ideas has also ended by allowing him to indulge his flair for optimism. Like Herzog himself, the story of his recovery lacks the true opposition of Otherness, just as his protests remain too much the worldly discontents of an unworldly man. The finest thing about it is Bellow's incredible grasp of the individual human plight—of the crisis of belief that lies beneath the complex surface of Herzog's behavior. As such the novel is a great portrait of the contemporary humanist, Jewish-style, whose relations with the modern world are as increasingly uncertain as Herzog demonstrates them to be. It's too bad that Bellow felt that he had to turn such a searching question of a book into an evasive answer.

A LONG GRAY LINE

REMINISCENCES. By DOUGLAS MACARTHUR. *McGraw-Hill. 438 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by MARCUS CUNLIFFE

MOST REVIEWERS have treated this as a Them, not an Us book. It is being bought by Them in quantity, to judge from best-seller lists, though We may wonder whether having bought it They are able to get through it. For even to Them it must seem grandiloquently soporific. To Us it is insufferable in apparently reinforcing every prejudice We have cherished against the military, and against Douglas MacArthur in particular. If this is MacArthur's testament for American posterity, We can only marvel again at his gift for misinterpreting the temper of his countrymen. The frontispiece is a color photograph of Our (no, Their) Hero in which everything about him, including the famous corncob pipe, has a strange golden gleam like a treasure hoard. He figures conspicuously, usually in proconsular poses, in the other photographs. The text is equally overweening and impeccable. We carry away the same impression which we brought to the book—namely, of an encrusted self-satisfaction, of an entire refusal to face the notion that other men might know better, that he himself might on occasion err. Experts in MacArthurism (well briefed some years ago in the excellent biography by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and Richard Rovere) can easily point to the places in the record where MacArthur is most vulnerable and where he has either distorted or ignored the truth. How, for example, could he still believe that the Bonus Marchers of 1932 were Communist-led? How could he be so cavalier in his account of the events leading up to Pearl Harbor, and of his own foresight in anticipating them? How could he pass so disdainfully over the dubious strategy and still more dubious military intelligence that exposed him to the sudden onslaught out of North Korea? What of his political involvements, at those moments when he was being boomed for the Presidency? No, the book repels us—Us. We wince at the odd impersonal vanity that leads him to announce so many medals awarded, so much gallantry, so much wisdom, so much disinterest. True, he leaves most of the actual commendatory phrases to others; but the glowing citations, the lavish praise in letters and speeches, reported verbatim, are unpleasant as well as tedious. We picture the old man culling them from his files and pressclippings with a kind of exhibitionist vanity peculiar in one so austere. True, he sometimes introduces a disclaimer, but with an unconvincing coyness ("The staff . . . presented me with a gold cigarette box with the inscription: 'The bravest of the brave.' It was, of course, an extravagant statement which defied all realities, but the sentiment moved me almost to tears."). We smile knowingly at the one-sentence mention of his first marriage ("In February 1922 I entered into matrimony, but it was not successful, and ended in divorce years later for mutual incompatibility."), and at the attachment for Mother that he maintained late into life (he did not marry again until she was dead). We are skeptical at the notion that this autocrat could have known what he was talking

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about when he decreed freedom and democracy for the Filipinos and the Japanese. We wince at the fruity, melodramatic, *squareness* of MacArthur's farewell address to West Point in 1962:

> My days of old have vanished tone and tint; they have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were . . . . I listen vainly, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll. . . . But in the evening of my memory, always I come back to West Point. Always there echoes and re-echoes in my ears—Duty-Honor-Country.

But is the Them-Us formula altogether adequate? Have We understood?

THE FIRST POINT is that he was an extraordinarily brave man in a dangerous trade. Again and again—in his early Philippine service, in Mexico, in France during 1918, in the Philippines once more and in New Guinea—he earned his medals with a display of resilient, almost reckless courage. He *was,* in an objective count, among the bravest of the brave.

In the second place, MacArthur's views, though fallible and sometimes disingenuous, were not stupid. He was badly wrong about Korea. On earlier occasions there was good sense in what he said; and his way of saying it compares quite favorably with the fussing and fuming of other commanders, American and British. He had cause to complain at the neglect of the Pacific theater in the grim months of 1942. Indeed, he would have been a weak commander if he had *not* urged the claims of his own theater. Nor, as Schlesinger and Rovere realize, was he exceptionally insubordinate—at least not until the close of his military career. The doctrine of civil control of the military has always needed to be qualified: absolute civilian supremacy would be as bad as the opposite. A certain amount of disgruntlement is healthy. In special and local circumstances it may be right to disobey orders. One suspects that MacArthur would have thought the dénouement of *The Caine Mutiny* silly, not just because of his own

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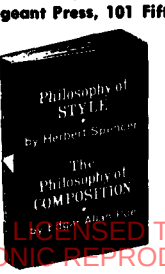

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ignominious dismissal but because in his long service he had seen instances of fruitful resistance to orders. He had also, it is true, seen Billy Mitchell court-martialed for overzealous advocacy of air power: was not Mitchell vindicated by events?

THE MAJOR POINT, however, is that MacArthur represents an extreme case of military professionalism. He lived in and for the Army: for the abstractions in the West Point motto—Duty-Honor-Country—that make us wince. Schlesinger and Rovere remark that he was an expatriate, to a greater degree than Henry James. The comment helps to remind us of the many years when he was in the Far East, isolated from the raucous atmosphere of home. But it is truer to say that he spent his life in an enclave—the un-American and yet hyper-American world of an army post. He was born into this closed existence, the son of a brilliant officer who had been a Civil War colonel at the age of nineteen: too young to vote when the election officers visited his camp in 1864. MacArthur lived in frontier stations, where his father reverted to the peacetime rank of captain and had to wait twenty-three years for promotion to major. The MacArthur line stretches so far back that we become confused between father and son. Kenesaw Mountain was as real to Douglas MacArthur as was Bataan. He had known the Philippines for forty years when Pearl Harbor came. He had served as an aide to Theodore Roosevelt and as chief of staff to Franklin Roosevelt.

Like his father, he had suffered periods of extended frustration in between glorious episodes when national drama and personal opportunity coincided. Soldiers in peace, an English poet said, are like chimneys in summer. Alfred de Vigny, an officer in the post-Napoleonic army, said that he and his companions were immured in the belly of a wooden horse that would never open in any Troy. The contrast with the glamor of wartime was all the more bitter. For in war the belly opens, the soldier is adored after the years of obscurity in which he is tempted into fantasies of persecution and salvation. In war Us and Them temporarily merge. A few years later and we are embarrassed by the rhetoric of Them, with its emphasis on medals, traditions, gallantries. We are horrified, twenty years on, to read what MacArthur's friend General George S. Patton told his troops before crossing to Normandy:

> Men, this stuff you heard about Americans wanting to stay out of this war and not wanting to fight, is a lot of bull shit. Traditionally, Americans love to fight. All real Americans love the sting of battle.

This corrupt unacceptable message is as bizarre as, say, the sudden heroic wordiness of Humphrey Bogart on the Murmansk run, in some old World War II movie resurrected for television late at night. But in wartime the message was at least half true for at least a part of each of us, in its belligerent certitude. The commander, though, needs to believe it wholeheartedly, peace or war, and to believe in himself to the brink of megalomania. Only some outrageous quality, some altogether inordinate pride, can carry the day for him in crisis. This is the moral, though possibly an unwitting one, of James Jones's *The Thin Red Line*. MacArthur's Pacific war is a nightmare: what an ill-named ocean. But the hard, cocksure West Pointers in Jones's novel are the ones who impose on the campaign an illusion of sanity, a saving promise of success.

The hermetic codes which enable the regulars to behave thus are not a useful guide to ordinary living. MacArthur's reminiscences are antipathetic. Yet if we are just to him we will not dismiss the book as mere posthumous self-seeking. We will see that the conditions of life in the military enclave, with plans and creeds laid up in mothballs against an emergency, did much to make him the figure held in mingled awe and contempt by countless GI's. He was *required* to adhere to the creed (Duty-Honor-Country), and he did. It helped him to be an extremely good soldier, and to appear an improbable, unlovable human being. It helped him too, since after all the creed is old-fashioned rather than inherently autocratic, to be a surprisingly successful interim governor of Japan.

PERHAPS the clue to his character lies in the word *old-fashioned*. Unlike the semi-civilian Dwight Eisenhower or Omar Bradley, MacArthur was an "army brat," in fact a survivor from an earlier military epoch. He was not an aristocrat on the Junker model, for the old American regular had not been that either. For the same reason he did not despise the civilian-soldier or insist upon martinet discipline. He was a special kind of old-timer, in having a long memory of family grandeur: his father before him had achieved proconsular dignity, the servant and model of the state. Indeed in his total outlook—his veneration for his parents and for West Point, his splendor in dress coupled with the frontier idiosyncrasy of the corncob, his sonorous 19th-century prose—Douglas was Arthur MacArthur reborn. He was a repository of antique modes, a perpetuation of a period when (ideally, at any rate) Us and Them marched together, dying utterances were felicitous, and words like Duty, Honor, Country had not yet been demolished by Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway privatized the code; MacArthur, though living partly in his private world of MacArthur imperatives, insisted that it was still public. In his mind's eye he bore the standard forward as his father had carried the actual standard of the 24th Wisconsin up Missionary Ridge. How corny. Yet how authentic: he was correct in complicated ways when he declared, before an ephemerally stirred Congress, that old soldiers never die.

THE ACADEMIC INDUSTRY

THE USES OF THE UNIVERSITY. By CLARK KERR. *Harvard University Press. 140 pp. $2.95.*

Reviewed by HAROLD TAYLOR

THE ARGUMENT of Mr. Kerr's book is that the American university is the center of the knowledge industry in this country. There is a heavy demand for certain kinds of knowledge and knowledgeable people to

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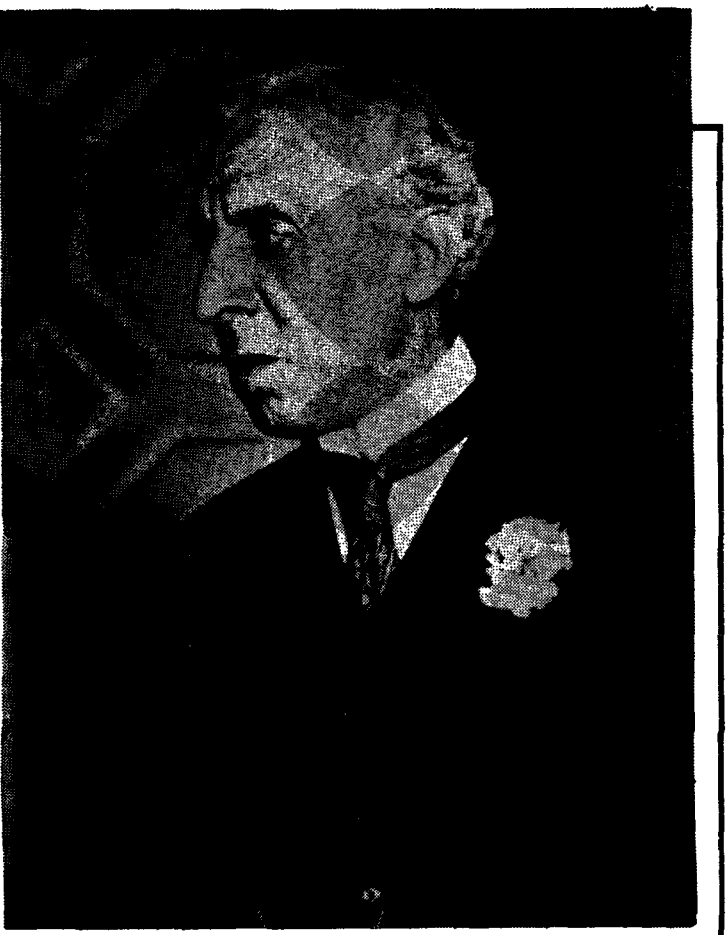

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move the society toward the goals it has set for itself, and the university exists to meet these demands. "The process cannot be stopped. The results cannot be foreseen. It remains to adapt." The universities able to adapt quickly and effectively will be the great universities of the future.

MR. KERR makes a parallel argument about the administration of the university. The President of the university presides over a loosely held set of bureaucracies; he mediates the forces at work among them, feeling their strength, deciding which ones are to be encouraged, which ones blocked, and which ones are so powerful that they would, if opposed, sweep the President away with them. There are varieties of interest groups, all of them legitimate—the students, the faculty, the alumni, the community, the voters, the government, industry, agriculture, "society." The President has to see that each one of the interests gets its fair hearing, its fair share of legitimate attention and remains in balance with the others.

The President is therefore not an educational leader, nor should he try to be. The faculty would not allow it, and his managerial duties prevent it. Mr. Kerr is suspicious of "vision," as he puts it. That day is over. The President is now a "mediator-initiator," although what the mediator can initiate in the system Mr. Kerr describes, God only knows. In the biggest places, a half-billion-dollar budget, tens of thousands of students, a hundred-million-dollar building program, a political apparatus, government contracts, and hundreds of administrative details, get in the way of any hope of doing anything about education. The President has to have the *opportunity to persuade* (Mr. Kerr's italics), but he must remember that the mediator "wins few clear-cut victories; he must aim more at avoiding the worst than seizing the best. He must find satisfaction in being *equally* distasteful to each of his constituencies; he must reconcile himself to the harsh reality that successes are shrouded in silence while failures are spotlighted in notoriety."

But why not seize the best? Why be distasteful to all constituencies? Why submit to the genteel cynicism of the academics? We are told by Mr. Kerr of the enormous growth in power of the organized intellect within the knowledge industry. We are told nothing about the way in which the power can be directed, by the President of the university, among others, toward ideal ends. "The ends are there," says Mr. Kerr, "the means must be ever improved in a competitive dynamic environment."

The ends are not there. They change all the time, and the means determine the ends. If a President buys scholars and his coaches buy football players, this defines the ends he is seeking—prestige and money. If the President is simply an executive with all the equipment of the "mediator-initiator," and his twin purpose is "the keeping of the peace and the furthering of progress," how does he choose which means for what ends? How does he decide what kind of peace is to be kept, what kind of progress is to be made, and what direction it should take? Or, for that matter, who decides what education is and what direction it should take? Not the faculty, since, as Mr. Kerr points out, they are not interested in education or educational policy. Not the students, they are never consulted. Not the vice-presidents and deans who, under the present system, are middle-management mediators in their own right, administering sections of the knowledge industry. Who then? The alumni? The Board of Regents? The state legislature? The government? A committee of outside experts?

A UNIVERSITY, no matter how big, must be a university, not a "multiversity," and if it exists as a collection of activities held together only by a common name—if, as Mr. Kerr says, "it has been embraced and led down the garden path by its environmental suitors," isn't it time that it shocked itself by its own situation and discovered at last "whether it has a brain as well as a body"? How can we, in view of Mr. Kerr's account of the seduction of the university by money and prestige, his statements about the scandalous neglect of undergraduates, the entrepreneurship among faculty members in the field of government contracts, the manipulative attitudes which have replaced the idea of comradeship among scholars and students—how can we accept, condone, or advocate a philosophy of mediation when the responsibility of the university is to give intellectual and cultural leadership?

The university is becoming organized so that competitive success by its members (high grades and prestige for students, high salaries and prestige for faculty members) is the criterion of value and reward. The society is so organized that competitive success in the economic and social system is the mark of American virtue. Then from what corner of the entire culture, if not from the universities, will come those ideas and criticisms which take the society out of its narrow orbit of self-acceptance?

The President of the United States is a mediator, in Mr. Kerr's terms. If that is all he is, he becomes a president like General Eisenhower, and decisions are made by the equilibrium of forces, not by the exercise of thought and imagination.

THE BIG universities have changed in precisely the ways Mr. Kerr has described. They have become corporations for producing, transmitting, and marketing knowledge, and in the process have lost their intellectual and moral identity. At the time that they should have been creative centers for the development of strategies for peace, disarmament, and world unity, they were busy with defense department contracts. When the educational problem of the Negro was getting worse by the day, they were busy making admission requirements more and more favorable to the white middle-class student from privileged environments. When the social habits and material ambition of the citizens were following the lead of the advertising agencies, the universities were producing graduates whose intellectual equipment was suited to reading advertising copy. When the public schools were groping for ways of improving the intellectual content of their curriculum, the universities were sneering at teachers colleges and schools

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of education as the province of the intellectually unfit and the spiritually slothful. At a time when political and social movements have been promoting authoritarian causes on a basis of anti-intellectualism, the universities have frowned on political action by liberal student activists.

In the face of all this, Mr. Kerr seeks a proper balance among competing interests, both in the relative importance attaching to the divisions of knowledge—the social sciences, the humanities, the creative arts, the natural sciences—and in the relative importance of teaching, research, professional education, general education, community service.

WHAT IS WRONG with Mr. Kerr's argument is that the pluralism of American society, while one of its primary characteristics, is not a pluralism devoid of all values, spreading in all directions like the content of a marsh. A poem is greater than a stock dividend, students are more important than projects, although all are necessary parts of the university structure. The university may be "a mechanism held together by administrative rules and powered by money," but the power of the money must be used to achieve certain large aims which it is up to the educators in the universities to decide. I do not see how the university president and his colleagues can run away from this. Nor do I see why the classical view of the European university should be held up as a model for universities everywhere else. I am weary of seeing Flexner, Newman, von Humboldt, and the rest cited as those who have given us the definition of the university, with deviations considered to be defections from intellectual virtue. The American land-grant university is a new institution, and need deliver no apology for deviating from German, British, or early American models. These were the agencies of a class society and existed to create an elite of the educated to govern in matters of taste, religion, economics, and politics. The land-grant university in America possesses its own particular genius. It was developed to serve the needs of a new kind of society in which the intellectual life was not to be divorced from the practical. Mr. Kerr's idea of a university designed to serve the needs of society is one which accepts the reality of a pluralism of social need and purpose. But it is still too narrow to define the university's mission.

THE MAJOR component missing in Mr. Kerr's conception is the use of the university to inform, enlighten, and enrich the lives of the students. It is clear from those passages of the book in which Mr. Kerr deals with students that in the scale of university interests they are close to the bottom. Mr. Kerr describes their plight, but has no plan of rescue. In his suggestions for the use of federal funds for education appear ideas for federal research centers, the continued support of research projects, a National Foundation for Higher Education, graduate fellowships, a national Council of Advisors on Education, but the most he can produce for students is to suggest that "federal agencies should permit, even encourage, post-doctoral fellows and research professors to teach one-quarter or even one-third time at no cost to the institution," and that teaching assistantships should be taken as seriously as research assistantships and fellowships.

But this palliative will hardly do. For the university, no matter how large and no matter how diverse its activities, exists within the society as the major force to keep the society intellectually honest and politically healthy. The students, and especially the undergraduates, are the instruments of cultural and social change, their minds are the means through which a society seeks its own future.

The production of knowledge and of knowledgeable people possessing marketable skills could presumably be done elsewhere than in the universities. Some business corporations and government agencies already do it, and American style and efficiency in organization make this comparatively easy, given the funds and a few first-rate executives. The hard task is to develop an educational community in which the central values of intellect and sensibility are shared by all its

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members without regard to the particular form of knowledge or skill possessed by the individuals in it.

What saves a university from becoming a training institute or a research institute is the student-body, and the mark of a true university is whether or not it takes its students seriously. They constitute the intellectual resources without which knowledge remains inert and social progress becomes impossible. To neglect them is to indicate that one is prepared to accept a role for the university as the servant of society, and as a place where faculty members, research scholars, and educational administrators band together to further interests peculiar to themselves and their clients.

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A TIME TO SPEAK. By CHARLES MORGAN, JR. *Harper & Row. 177 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH EPSTEIN

A NEW KIND of Southern gentleman has arisen within the last decade or so. He is no longer the region's *beau ideal,* but rather its renegade, and he is no longer defined by the old standards of lineage and wealth. Nonetheless, he *is* driven by the old ideals of courage, integrity, and honor. I am thinking of men like Harry Ashmore, Thomas D. Clark, James McBride Dabbs, Jonathan Daniels, Francis Pickens Miller, and Ralph McGill. Just as there were only a few of the old-style Southern gentlemen, so are there only a few of the new. Whenever, therefore, a name is added to the list, it is cause for celebration. Two relatively new such names are those of James W. Silver and Charles Morgan, Jr.

That Silver and Morgan are accounted troublesome and even dangerous radicals in their respective states of Mississippi and Alabama is an indication of how wildly out of touch with reality much of the South remains; for two less radical types are difficult to imagine. The first is a teacher

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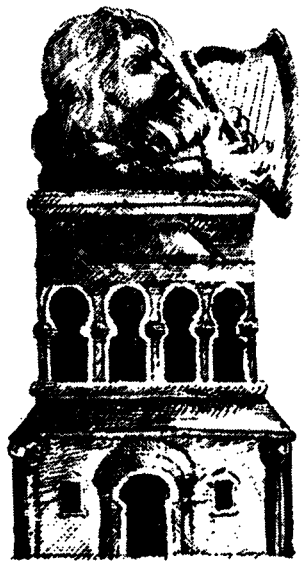

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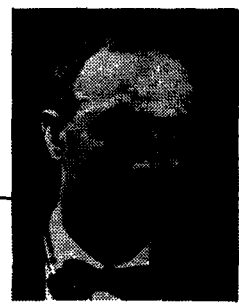

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and scholar, a man settled enough in his ways to have remained at the University of Mississippi for the past twenty-eight years. The second, a lawyer by profession, is by nature a joiner of organizations and even something of a booster. As for geographical credentials, Professor Silver's family moved to the South when he was twelve, and he was educated at Southern schools; while Mr. Morgan was born and has spent his entire life in the South. Both have an inordinate sense of community responsibility, and neither was able to restrain himself from speaking out as he watched his neighbors, lacking any real leadership, careen down a well-paved road to disaster. As a consequence of this lack of restraint, Mr. Morgan was forced to install floodlights around his house in Birmingham and Professor Silver to keep a shotgun in his front-hall closet.

In telling of their experiences both Silver and Morgan are utterly free of moral posturing. This is not only refreshing in itself but also makes all the more instructive their accounts of the background to two of the most hideous blots on recent American history: the student riot greeting the arrival of James H. Meredith on the Ole Miss campus, and the bomb-killing of four children in a Negro church in Birmingham. The strategy of their books is simply to relate how events acted upon them, and to suggest that, under similar circumstances, no one could have responded much differently—and still remain a decent man.

The greater part of *Mississippi: The Closed Society* is devoted to an analysis of the peculiar development of Mississippi's institutions—a development which culminated in the rifle fire and molotov cocktails that were aimed at the federal marshals in Oxford on September 30 and October 1, 1962. Professor Silver describes how, through both deliberate action and fear-inspired inaction, the professions, the clergy, business, and most especially the state's politicians have all helped to close the doors and shutters of Mississippi society. No breach, however minor, can be tolerated, since the slightest crack in the wall could bring down the entire structure, which is based on the systematic denial of their rights to the state's 900,000 Negroes (or 42.3 per cent of its population). This structure has brought with it a number of other dubious benefits, which Silver spells out in detail: a relative lack of industry, vastly inferior and censor-hounded schools, a politics of racist gibberish, a consistent loss of the state's brightest young people, and an atmosphere which can be likened to that of the Iberian Inquisition.

It is something of a rarity these days to come upon a man who can understand and yet still despise. After citing the terror tactics used to keep down Negro voter registration, for example, Professor Silver writes: "It hardly softens the nature of such acts to understand that those who inspire or take part in them are frightened themselves." Throughout, the emphasis is where it deserves to be: not on the psychology of the actors but on the acts. "One of today's recurring little sophistries," Silver notes, "has it that equality must be earned and can never be achieved by force or law. The historic fact is that in Mississippi, between 1875 and 1890, inequality was effected by force and finally regularized by law, that is, by the constitution under which the state still operates." He goes on to make the interesting point that in some ways the traditional claim of Mississipians, and of segregationists generally, that Negroes were better off under slavery is indeed true. As slaves, fewer Negroes were lynched or otherwise brutalized; after all, it would not have done to abuse another man's private property rights.

While Negroes in Mississippi are subjected to terrorism, whites who do not appreciate the glories of the official orthodoxy are subjected to ostracism. "Mississippi is the way it is," according to Silver, "not because of its view of the Negro—here it is simply the South exaggerated—but because of its closed society, its refusal to allow freedom of inquiry or to tolerate 'error of opinion.'" That early-night knock on the door in Jackson or Natchez signals not the arrival of the Gestapo or the GPU but the White Citizens Council—the "uptown klan"—taking, of all things, a poll. This is how those figures showing the unanimity of white opinion on segregation are arrived at.

"The question," as Silver's friend, the late William Faulkner, put it, "is no longer of white against black. It is no longer whether or not white blood shall remain pure, it is whether or not white people shall remain free." The likely answer to that question in Mississippi seems bleak—bleaker, certainly, with every passing month. To be sure, there are dissenters in the state: after the Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, the efforts of Aaron Henry and the Freedom Democratic Party are well known. There are also white Mississippians like Hazel Brannon Smith, whose Lexington *Advertiser* prints what Mrs. Smith pleases; the twenty-eight ministers who issued a "Born of Conviction" statement condemning the actions and policies of the Barnett administration; and Rabbi Charles Mantinband of Hattiesburg, who instructed his congregation that "The time is past when a Jew dare remain neutral." But Mrs. Smith's paper is constantly harassed and contains little advertising; the twenty-eight ministers have gradually departed the state; and as a counter to Rabbi Mantinband—who has since moved to Texas—there is Rabbi Benjamin Schultz of Clarksdale, who believes that "if Mississippi had its way, 'red-baiter' would not be a dirty word," and who is currently president of the Coahoma County Ministerial Association.

In a letter to the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, Silver intimates that had William Faulkner lived another year, he, too, would have left the state. This is perhaps not all that surprising, since almost everyone else seems to have given up on Mississippi, or at least on the possibility of its ever accepting the inevitable with any measure of reasonableness or dignity. Conversion, persuasion, even the old hard-headed appeal to the cash register—methods which have worked to some advantage in states like North Carolina, Arkan-

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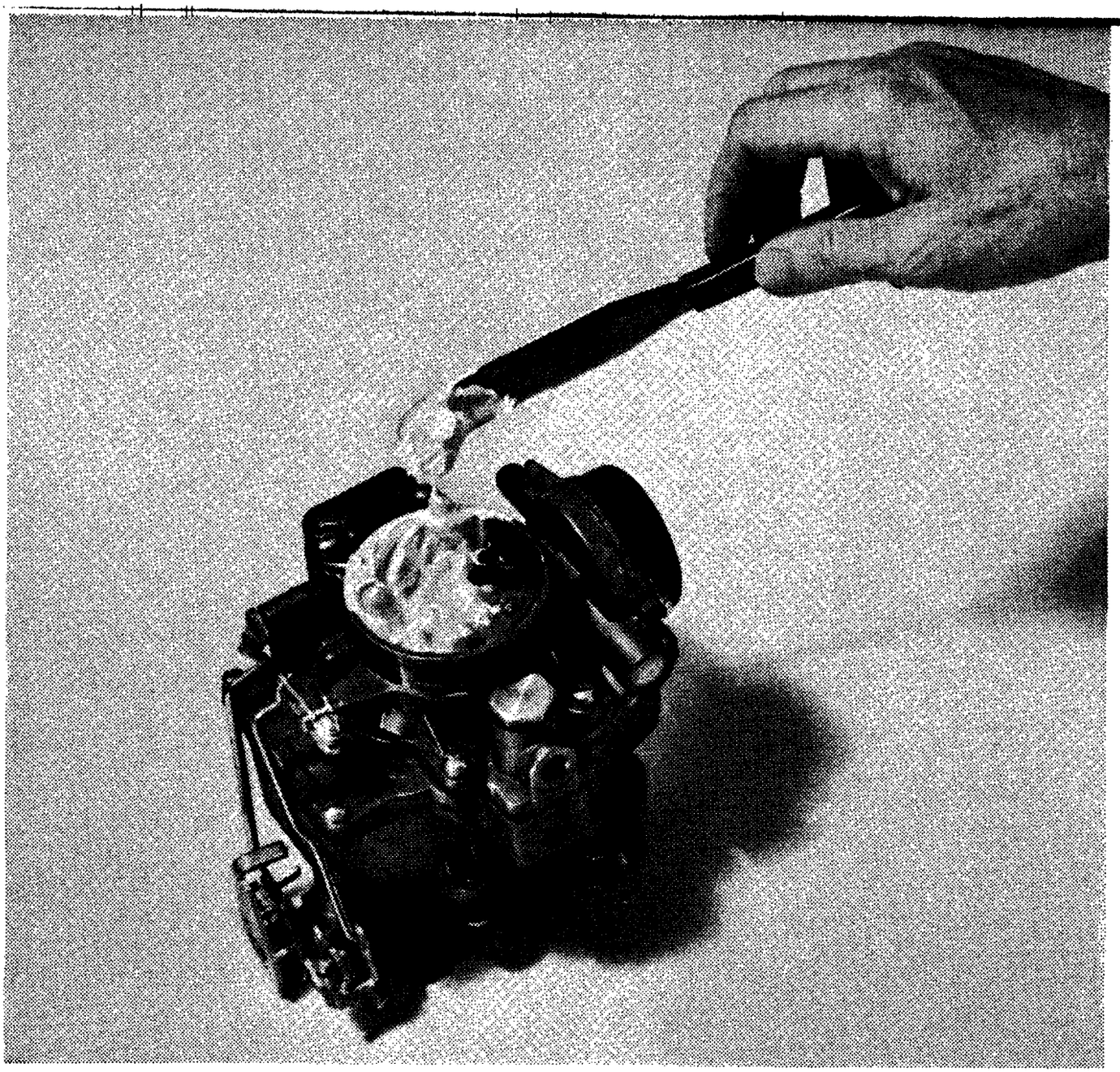

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sas, and Georgia—have thus far been of no avail in Mississippi. Nothing less than what Mississippians most abhor—deliberate and decisive federal intervention—is likely to bring the state around. Professor Silver suggests as much in his conclusion: "It cannot be long before the country, seeing that persuasion alone must fail, and perhaps acting through the power and authority of the federal government, will, with whatever reluctance and sadness, put an end to the closed society in Mississippi."

CHARLES MORGAN'S *A Time to Speak* is only secondarily an analysis of Alabama politics; primarily it is an account of a young man's rough initiation into brutal realities. The lesson of Morgan's experience in Alabama is that in the South today the position called "moderate" is untenable if not impossible—at least so long as extremists see moderation as weakness and so long as the rest of the community is willing to accommodate the extremists.

Charles Morgan first achieved prominence with a speech delivered before Birmingham's Young Men's Business Club, of which he was a member, on September 16, 1963, the Monday following the bombing of the Negro Baptist church. The speech was a lacerating and impassioned philippic, spreading its contumely evenly on all of the city's whites for condoning, by commission or omission, a community heritage of racial intolerance. "What's it like living in Birmingham?" was the lead into its short peroration. "No one really has and no one will until this city becomes part of the United States. Birmingham is not a dying city. It is dead."

But the speech was, as it were, Morgan's commencement address, marking the end of an education which had begun with his early decision to make his home in Birmingham and his career in politics. Although his parents wanted him to go to school in the East, he wisely chose the state university at Tuscaloosa, since all through the South it is the state universities which provide the best opportunity for vital contacts; moreover, at Tuscaloosa there is a long tradition of student politics. Morgan spent seven years there, from 1947 through 1954, taking a law degree and becoming a significant force in the Alabama Young Democrats as well as president of the student government.

In 1956, Miss Autherine Lucy's attempt to integrate the University of Alabama was met with ugly demonstrations edging over into riots, and she was finally dismissed. The lesson, as Morgan notes, "seemed clear enough and its message flashed across the South: Violence works." Naïve as he then was, Morgan had earlier telephoned Miss Lucy to convey his wish that all would go smoothly. It was a handsome gesture, but in a state where merely to be photographed with a Negro is an unspeakable offense, such a phone call would eventually have cost Morgan his political life, had he not first thrown it away himself through his legal practice.

Morgan's first legal skirmish was rudimentary enough. Defending an illiterate Negro accused of murdering a Negro woman, he learned that the state of Alabama offered four varieties of justice: one for a white committing a crime against another white; a second for a Negro committing a crime against another Negro; a third for a white against a Negro; and a fourth for a Negro against a white. But this was only an exercise in awareness; involvement was not to come until 1960, a year Morgan says he began as a politician and ended as a lawyer. Thomas C. Reeves, a twenty-year-old pre-ministerial student at Birmingham Southern College had arranged meetings with students at two of the city's Negro schools, and these horrendous acts triggered the demand for his expulsion from school. The atmosphere in Birmingham was heating up and Reeves was an "agitator." Morgan, as a regular Democrat, was at the time trying to stem a Dixiecrat revolt in Alabama and wanted not at all to get involved in a civil-rights battle. Nevertheless, when the Reeves case was referred to him, he accepted it. As it happened, the president of Birmingham Southern, Dr. Henry King Stanford, had determined not to let the Yahoos run over his school, and after several continuations Reeves graduated, returned to his home in Tennessee, and the case was dropped. Morgan, in his own words, had a "reprieve."

Not for long. In April, Harrison Salisbury of the New York *Times* had visited Birmingham and returned to write of the city: "Every channel of communication, every medium of mutual interest, every reasoned approach, every inch of middle ground has been fragmented by the emotional dynamite of racism. . . ." To get his story Salisbury must have talked with someone, and the powers in Birmingham wanted to know who. Reverend Robert E. Hughes, executive director of the Alabama Council on Human Relations, seemed a likely prospect. Hughes was called in to testify in connection with a libel suit against Salisbury and the *Times* and, moreover, was asked to bring along certain Council records (there was ample reason to believe that the Council itself was also a target of the investigation). Hughes needed a lawyer and in Birmingham lawyers for controversial cases were not easy to come by. Finally—inevitably, one might say—a meeting was arranged with Morgan. ". . . I agreed to talk with Hughes: someone had to." This has a characteristic ring: Morgan is forever calculating debits and credits, calibrating the effect of every move on his family, his career, his law partner—and then making the materially wrong, morally right, decision.

After much litigation and a weekend in jail, Hughes was allowed to appear before the grand jury without the Council records. Shortly thereafter, however (not without pressure from the North Alabama Conference of the Methodist Church), he applied for and received a transfer to do missionary work in Southern Rhodesia. And Morgan, in the process of having become involved, had also become a marked man. In the Birmingham mayoralty race of 1961, his efforts on behalf of Tom King, an avowed moderate running on a program of progress and economic growth, had to be confined to behind-the-scenes organ-

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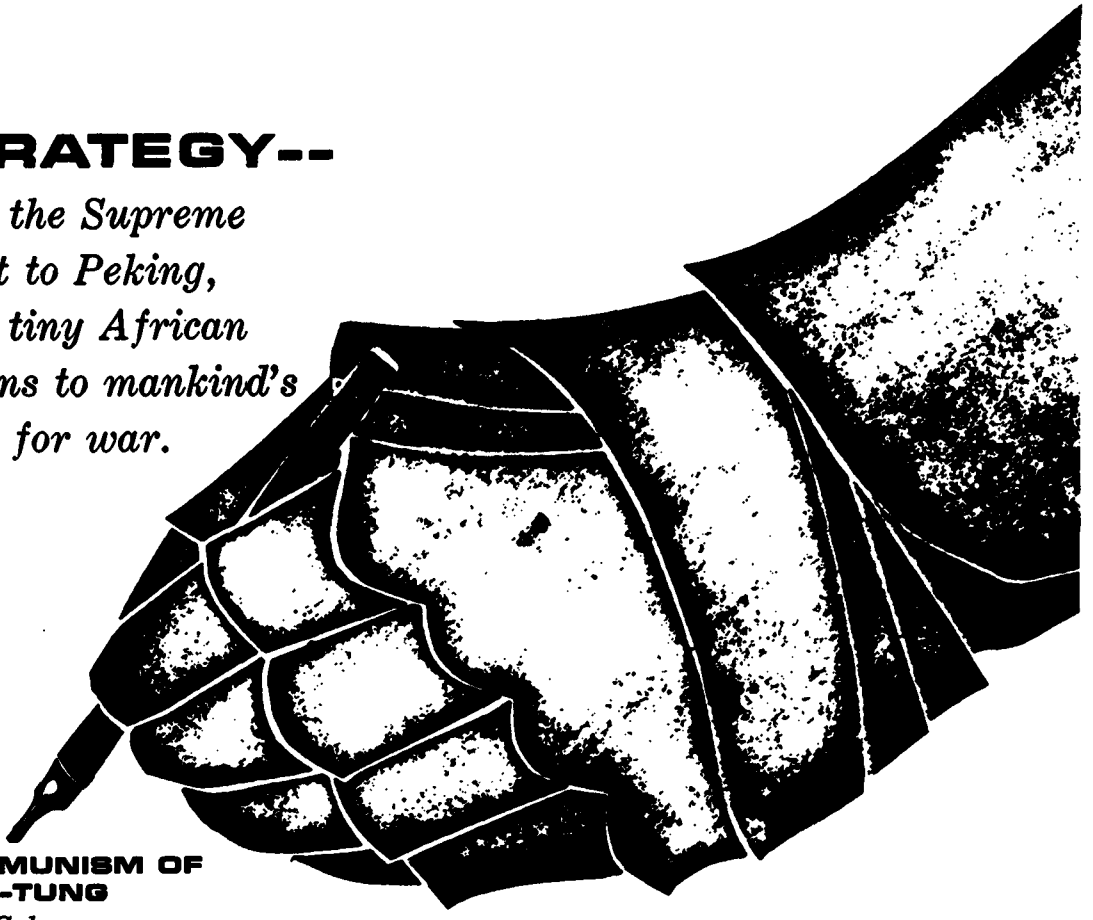

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izational work. King lost anyway, having made the silly error of winning the Negro vote in the primary—instead of the runoff, where it would have counted—in the year of the freedom rides and sit-ins. The going thing was "segmanship," the politics in which the victor at the polls is the man who most convincingly bolsters the illusion that integration will never occur.

ALTHOUGH HE WAS to remain in Birmingham two more years, the rest of Morgan's story reads like an account of the tail-end of a military campaign: the part known as the "mop-up." In 1961-62, against the advice of friends, he took part in a successful fight for reapportionment of the state legislature. In the summer of 1962, at a citizens' meeting on a court order to desegregate public facilities, he found himself rising from his seat, to answer a foul-mouthed segregationist. (Silver exhibits a similar kind of futile reflex action in writing letters to a racist press which he knows will either refuse to print them or will edit them heavily.) In the same summer, undertaking the defense of Boaz Melvin Sanders, "age 25, black, male," charged with robbing and killing a white service-station attendant, Morgan had another opportunity to refine his views on justice in Alabama: "Directly and indirectly, consciously and unconsciously, by ways both harsh and subtle, our state's legal system reflected and provided the bulwark for a social system that treated Negroes as lower-caste citizens." In a motion to quash the indictment against Sanders on the ground that no Negro could receive a fair trial in the state, he delivered himself of a critique of Alabama jurisprudence that, in the cold clarity of its legalistic language, seems, from the portions of it quoted in the book, much superior rhetorically to his speech before the Young Men's Business Club.

Later in 1962, he defended Reverend Norman C. Jimerson, Hughes's successor on the Council of Human Relations, against the scandalously trumped-up charge of conspiracy in organizing street demonstrations. Walking out of the courthouse after the case had been thrown out of court, he heard a man say: "Look! There goes that nigger-lovin' son of a bitch from Birmingham"; it was the sort of remark usually reserved for his clients. Early in 1963, he defended a twenty-three-year-old SNCC veteran named John Robert Zellner against similarly absurd charges. Next he helped smooth the way for the admission of Dave McGlathery, a Negro worker at NASA's Marshall Flight Center in Huntsville, to graduate studies at the University of Alabama's Huntsville Extension. The spring and summer of 1963 in Birmingham belonged to Bull Connor and his police dogs. On September 15 the bomb went off in the Negro church and on the following day Morgan delivered his famous speech. "You've destroyed your usefulness here," Morgan's friends told him. And in the most practical sense, it was the truth.

NOT LONG afterward, Charles Morgan left Birmingham for Alexandria, Virginia, where he now lives. The question of why either Morgan or Silver—or for that matter anyone with even a modicum of talent and intelligence—chooses to stay on in the South is an intriguing one that neither of the two men deals with satisfactorily. Perhaps the obvious answer is the best and only one: to them, for better or worse, the South is home. But there may be another answer—one which lies partly in a dream and partly in a historical accident. The accident, which lends credibility to the dream, is that much of the industrial revolution in this country has by-passed the South. The dream itself is of no less than a new America. A journalist I know, a Northerner who has spent the past five years in the South, recently told me: "The South is America's last chance." This may be a bit too eschatological for most tastes, but there is something to the idea that the South, uncluttered by much of the rubble of disorderly industrialization and unencumbered by the inhuman rhythms of the subway and monster skyscraper, could be the breeding ground for a more humane existence; a place where grace is at least conceivable. With less to tear down, it would be easier to build things up properly; and with the shoddy, shabby example of great stretches of the North to go on, it seems a task possible of achievement. Certainly it is a noble, even ennobling, vision. But in repudiating men like James Silver and Charles Morgan, in ignoring its own best instincts, and locating its tradition in the continued suppression of the Negro, the South, alas, repudiates that dream.

MORAL REASON

WORSHIP AND ETHICS: A STUDY IN RABBINIC JUDAISM. By MAX KADUSHIN. *Northwestern University Press. 329 pp. $8.50.*

Reviewed by MARVIN FOX

THIS BOOK is an attempt to give a new understanding of rabbinic ethics, a field of study which has been sadly neglected by serious scholars. In an interesting and illuminating departure from conventional treatments of the subject, Dr. Kadushin tries to show that there is an intimate relationship in rabbinic Judaism between worship and ethics. That he has made a significant contribution to our understanding of rabbinic Judaism cannot be doubted. Unfortunately, however, Dr. Kadushin is not content to remain within the field of rabbinic scholarship, where his erudition and command are considerable; he also strays into the realm of speculation to develop a theory concerning the peculiar character of rabbinic value-concepts. And in expanding this theory, he frequently relies on unsound and ill-founded arguments.

Dr. Kadushin's basic contention, both here and in earlier works, seems to be that the rabbis were not systematic philosophers—a view to which we can hardly take exception. Certainly, it is true that the sages of the Talmud and the associated literature did not deal with their problems in formal philosophic fashion. But philosophic ideas and the techniques of logical argument and analysis are by no means the exclusive prop-

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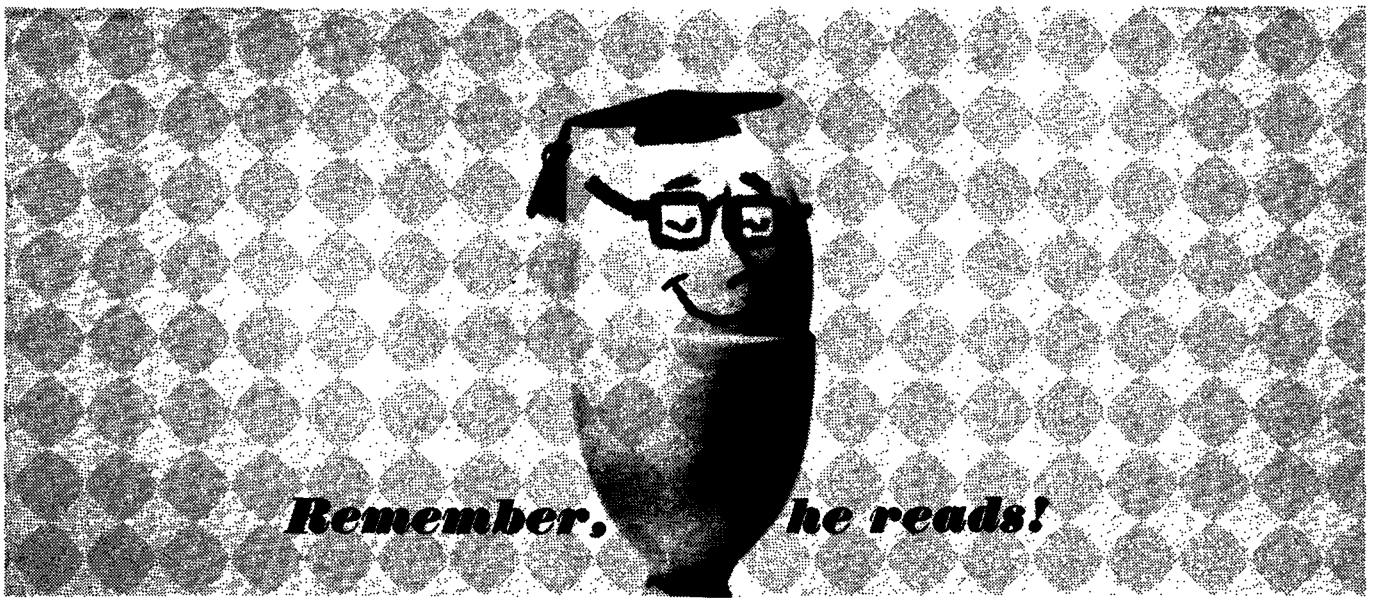

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erty of technical philosophers. Such ideas and techniques are to be found in every literature which concerns itself—as the rabbinic tradition does—with the ultimate questions. Dr. Kadushin, however, is determined to deny even these rudiments of philosophic method to the rabbis.

Thus he asserts categorically that "a rabbinic text is always misconstrued when given a philosophical interpretation"—a statement which surely deserves a prize for sheer dogmatism and one which would seem to indict the work of scholars ranging from Philo to Maimonides to Hermann Cohen. Even the great Louis Ginzberg (to whom Dr. Kadushin acknowledges his debt) is apparently in need of instruction by his former pupil on how to read rabbinic texts properly. It was Dr. Ginzberg who, commenting on the argument for the existence of God attributed to Abraham in the Midrash (and elsewhere), noted that "in all the sources . . . stress is laid upon the fact that Abraham came to know God through his own reasoning about the universe and its ruler who must necessarily exist." Ginzberg also wrote that these sources tell us that "Abraham discovered the true faith by meditating on nature." What are these if not "philosophic interpretations" of rabbinic texts?

Dr. Kadushin's failure to distinguish between formal technical philosophizing and the philosophic elements which are present in all thought drives him to such extremes as denying, for example, that in the rabbinic view the *Shema* ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is one") is to be understood as an affirmation of the unity of God—an avowal, that is, of monotheism. It was the medieval Jewish thinkers, he holds, who first espoused this misinterpretation under the influence of secular philosophy. "The fact remains," says Dr. Kadushin, "that reading the *Shema* in this way is an interpretation and that for the ordinary man it over-intellectualizes what is primarily a mystical experience."

But does not any attempt to explain any given text constitute an "interpretation"? And if "interpretation" itself is intrinsically bad, Dr. Kadushin seems as culpable as the medievals he attacks. What is his own reading of the *Shema* if not an interpretation? Moreover, though we may grant that "the ordinary man" does not grasp a text in the same way as a highly sophisticated reader, is Dr. Kadushin ready to claim that the Bible, the rabbinic texts, and the liturgy reflect a level of understanding and insight no different from that of ordinary men? Indeed, the most telling rebuttal of Dr. Kadushin's view is to be found finally in the fact that he himself is constrained to use philosophic terminology in explaining rabbinic teaching. Is not that very "doctrine of the immanence of God" (which he finds was unacceptable to the rabbis) a philosophic construct? Or does Dr. Kadushin perhaps believe that philosophic elements are to be found only in what the rabbis rejected and not in what they affirmed?

Dr. Kadushin's possible line of defense might be contained in his statement that:

> The concepts relating to the experience of God are . . . neither philosophical ideas nor philosophically inspired—nor have they any philosophical implications unless we force them into a framework that adds nothing, pragmatically, to the experience of God itself.

Where we do find philosophic ideas in rabbinic theology, Dr. Kadushin seems to be suggesting here, they are of no importance because they are not effective in religious experience. But what precisely does he mean by "religious experience"—a concept which seems to have such a high priority in his system? (The aim of the book, he writes, "is to describe how *Halakhah,* working with the value-concepts of the folk as a whole, enables the individual to achieve religious experience.") The closest he comes to telling us is in his use of the term "normal mysticism" as a description of the way in which rabbinic Judaism "enables a person to make normal, commonplace, recurrent situations and events occasions for worship."

But the very idea of "religious experience," as a separate mode of

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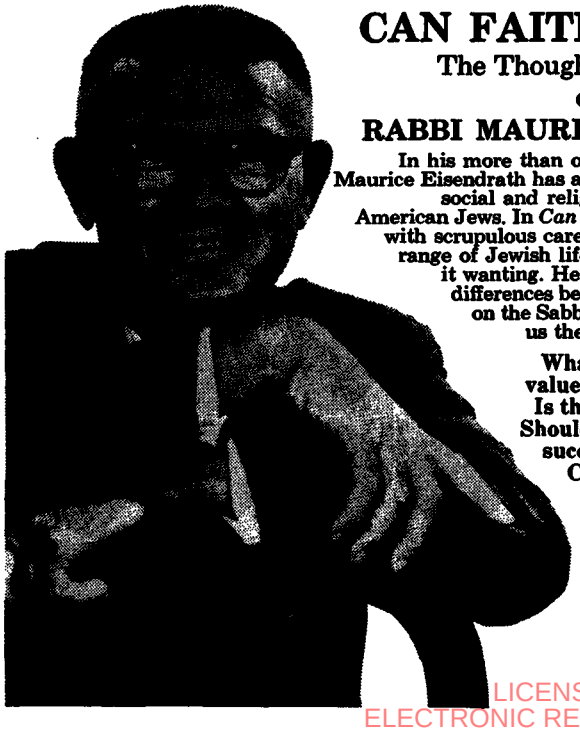

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awareness at least, has been seriously questioned. There is no convincing evidence that a special mode of cognition exists which can properly be called religious. A "poignant sense of the nearness of God"—in Dr. Kadushin's words—is not necessarily a veridical experience, and to make it the center of Jewish religious concern is hazardous indeed. Is it not clear that religious men vary widely in temperament, as well as in sensitivity and intellectual power? Religious experience, if the term is to mean anything at all, cannot be restricted to the domain of mysticism, not even the "normal mysticism" Dr. Kadushin talks about—fruitful though it is as a concept, and welcome though it is as an addition to our religious lexicon. Responses in the act of prayer itself may range in quality all the way from a mere mechanical recitation to the anguished elevation of Isaiah as he hears the seraphim proclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts." Even while singing praises to the same God in identical words, different men will have different experiences; and ev n the same man may have thoughts that vary with the occasion and his own state of being. Instead of that mystical awareness of the "nearness of God" which Dr. Kadushin exalts above all responses, a man in the act of praying may find himself directed toward a metaphysical insight into some aspect of divinity. To deny religious legitimacy to what could be styled a "philosophic" response of this kind is to read out of the tradition some of our greatest spirits and to impoverish rabbinic theology beyond recognition.

WHEN WE SHIFT our attention from the subject of worship to that of rabbinic ethics, the book's second major concern, we find once again that Dr. Kadushin's antagonism to philosophy has led him to extreme and indefensible claims. There is no quarreling with his desire to distinguish between the ethics of the rabbis and the ethical systems of the philosophers—a distinction which is fairly self-evident, and does not seem to require a treatise in its defense. What is distressing, however, is the basis on which he seeks to establish his claim for this distinction.

Unlike the ethical systems of the philosophers, Dr. Kadushin maintains, rabbinic ethics are the product of "a historically evolved tradition;" they are, moreover, rooted in the common experience of the people. Philosophic ethics, on the other hand, constitute "a system thought out by a philosopher." This view is hard to take seriously. The philosopher may order, systematize, seek to justify the moral values of his time and tradition—but it is not therefore to be supposed that he invented these values. (Indeed the examples Dr. Kadushin cites to support his case—Aristotle and Kant—seem to me to prove its opposite.)

Still with reference to the same distinction, we next learn that unlike the terms of the philosophers, "rabbinic value-concepts . . . such as Torah, mitzvah, . . . charity, holiness, repentance, man . . . have a different character than other types of terms or concepts. These terms are connotative only, and hence are not amenable to formal definition." In questioning this astonishing statement (which is not a momentary lapse, since it is repeated in substance a number of times throughout the book), we must ask by what rule of logic a term is to be considered "not amenable to formal definition" just because it is connotative? Here is what one of the most widely used college logic texts has to say about connotative definition: "It is regarded by many writers as the most important kind of definition, and by some as the only 'genuine' kind." Another text similarly says that "the customary meaning of 'definition' is connotation." Other kinds of definition may be admitted, but no responsible student of these matters could accept Dr. Kadushin's notion that connotation is what makes definition impossible.

Here again Dr. Kadushin's own argument is full of inconsistencies. Thus we find him maintaining, on the one hand, that rabbinic value terms are absolutely indefinable, and on the other hand, making assertions such as the following: "At times . . . the word 'man' is no more than a description of a bio-

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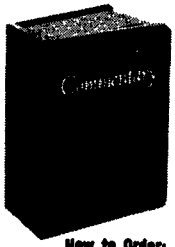

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logical species, but at other times it has, on the contrary, a universalistic, valuational connotation." But if value terms cannot be distinguished from non-value terms, how are we to differentiate between the merely biological and the valuational meaning of "man"?

Philosophic ethics are also defective, Dr. Kadushin further asserts, because they depend for sanction on some ultimate criterion, and he seems to think that given such an ultimate criterion it necessarily follows that we cannot cope with the particularity of each moral situation. But there is no reason why a general rule pertaining to moral action cannot be applied to particular cases. Both Aristotle and Kant—to take Dr. Kadushin's own illustrations once again—dealt at length and in detail with a host of particular moral issues, questions, and circumstances.

Nor is it true, as Dr. Kadushin would have us believe, that the rabbis made do without recourse to an ultimate criterion. Indeed Dr. Kadushin himself, consciously or not, admits to the existence of such a criterion even while struggling mightily to prove its absence. He claims to have shown that "the rabbis had a most profound awareness of what is moral and ethical, and that they even adumbrated the sphere of morality, and that all this was achieved without recourse to a formal definition or an ultimate criterion. It was achieved through a concept, that of *'derekh eretz.'*" But what is this concept of *derekh eretz,* if not an "ultimate criterion" which functions, like any other, to distinguish the sphere of the moral from the non-moral and to differentiate between moral and immoral acts?

IT IS TRUE that the rabbis did not ordinarily deal in formal definitions or formulate explicitly ultimate criteria for moral behavior. But this merely indicates that theirs was a folk morality, not yet exposed to philosophic analysis. And Dr. Kadushin's announcement that "the moral life is altogether possible without definitions of morality" hardly seems a great discovery. No one ever supposed that there was no morality until philosophers offered systematic expositions of ethics, any more than anyone ever imagined that there were no planetary motions prior to the birth of astronomy or no gravitational attraction until Newtonian physics came along. Scientists do not create nature and philosophers do not create society. One of their tasks is to make explicit definitions and criteria that are implicit in the natural world or the values of a society. Men engage in disputation with one another and construct valid arguments without knowing the rules of formal logic, just as they act virtuously or unvirtuously without necessarily being aware of a formal system of ethics.

Finally, there is yet another ground on which we must question Dr. Kadushin's assertion that there is no ultimate criterion in rabbinic ethics. Quite apart from his own criterion (veiled as a "concept") of *derekh eretz,* all normative Jewish practice rests on Torah, viewed as divine revelation: this is the ultimate criterion to which rabbinic Judaism appeals. George Foot Moore expresses this view when he tells us that for rabbinic Judaism "right and wrong were . . . not defined by the reason and conscience of men, naïve or reflective, nor by national custom or the *consensus gentium,* but by the revealed will of God." Why Dr. Kadushin fails to acknowledge this very obvious "ultimate criterion" is something of a puzzle, to be explained, perhaps, only by the lengths of oversight to which tendentiousness can carry an argument.

NON-LEGISLATIVE ARTS

CONGRESS: THE SAPLESS BRANCH. By JOSEPH S. CLARK. *Harper & Row. 268 pp. $4.95.*

THE SENATE ESTABLISHMENT. By JOSEPH S. CLARK and OTHER SENATORS. *Hill and Wang. 144 pp. $3.50; paperback, $1.50.*

Reviewed by DAVID T. BAZELON

THE WORD "reform" should be understood as a slogan—much as we have witnessed the word "pov-

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erty" becoming a slogan in the past year or so and taking over the role "reform" once played. But "reform" will soon achieve its former eminence again because it is more hallowed historically and because its underlying terms are much more serious. As a matter of fact, with a little reform accomplished here and there, we might be able to discuss and legislate improvements in the use of our wealth and the condition of our population without cramming these comprehensive subjects into a sentimental 19th-century handkerchief box.

"REFORM" IS the generally preferred word for a formal shift in power relations to reflect already (or mostly) accomplished historical shifts. It is preferred because it seems always to imply something rather nobler than that. For this writer, however, there is hardly anything nobler that we human beings ever attempt or manage to attain than the bringing of our formal relations more into line with the changed facts of our situation—especially if we also manage not to mess up the whole works in the process. But most people—educated middle-class people in particular—disagree: for them, the biggest thing is to stop doing wrong and start doing right, thereby making our lot much better—right now.

Not Senator Clark. To be sure, as one of the staunchest all-around liberals in either chamber and a politician with a large educated middle-class constituency, he could hardly be expected to avoid all claim to the nobility lying easily at hand. The patrician Senator from Pennsylvania (where you have to fight to stay in office) began his second term by taking on the Senate bosses in public on the issue of committee assignments (he has for long wanted one on Foreign Affairs). This was not mere noble posturing, however; it was a calculated opening assault in what he knew would be a long and dangerous campaign that he could begin effectively only by putting his own career in jeopardy—which he did. Moreover, he did not take his fight to the hopeless floor of the Senate, or to the public through these two books, until he had lost decisively on the inside—and lost on an issue so practical and personal that he would have to launch the public battle under the accusation, so bloodcurdling in America, of sour grapes.

The Senate Establishment is a transcript of Senator Clark's speeches and exchanges with other senators during four days in February 1963, when he undertook to complain in detail about the decisions of the Democratic Steering Committee concerning the assignment preferences of the greatly augmented liberal bloc of Democratic senators (Clark's group, which made out badly). The issues and considerations become complicated and even obscure at times; but *The Senate Establishment* is still inside talk of a very revealing kind—James MacGregor Burns in his Foreword calls it "a superb case study."

While Clark was supported on the Senate floor by Douglas, Proxmire, and some others, it would be stretching matters to call this action a debate. As usual, only a handful were present. The Majority Leader, Senator Mansfield, participated ("I really dislike to wash our dirty Democratic linen in public, but I suppose it has to be done every once in a while"), but only to defend his own past effort to be fair; Senators Byrd and Russell, the hearts of the matter, were absent. Only one member of their clique, Senator Long of Louisiana, spoke at all—and he limited himself to pointing out that *he* didn't get everything he wanted either at the beginning of his career in the upper chamber.

SENATORIAL DISCOURSE, of course, is burdened with incredible politeness. But what emerges, even through this veil, is: (1) that the big committees—Finance, Appropriations, Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, Judiciary—are controlled by the conservative bi-partisan establishment and defended by every means against encroachment of any kind; (2) that these means include invoking or ignoring seniority, as this purpose may be served; (3) that members from whatever area who vote against amendment of the cloture rule

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tend to do conspicuously better on committee assignments, legislative favors, etc., than those who vote for it; and (4) that the conservative, mostly Southern Democratic members of the Club, or Inner Sanctum, or Establishment, do about as little as their Republican allies to help provide liberal senators with the kind of record which could be expected to assist in their re-election. (The big liberal Class of '58—particularly at issue here—just went to the voters this fall.)

Congress: The Sapless Branch incorporates much of the general material in *The Senate Establishment*, but it extends and deepens the analysis considerably by including characterizations of the House and of the relation of Congress to the Presidency and congressmen to constituencies; it also provides a long schedule of internal and external reforms. All in all, it is a good, clear, comprehensive exposition of the problem of Congress—although it contains a rather embarrassing liberal instant-history of the United States along with a very suggestive capsule history of congressional reform. The latter is particularly useful for demonstrating that Congress always changes, purposefully as well has haphazardly, and that "reform" is therefore not the exclusive pastime of political science professors. (Their exclusive pastime is Proposed Rational Reform, which is another matter.)

Senator Clark *is*, after all, a politician, and the reader pays for the consequent authority of experience by having to listen to an occasionally heavy public voice. Yet there are also some bright insights and basic shrewdities—the description, for instance, of how the archaic atmosphere on the Hill generates a mystique for befuddling the new Member, whose befuddlement is essential to the continued prosperity of the whole system: the biggest danger to the established powers, perhaps the only real danger, was, is, and probably always will be the threat of a Young Turks' revolt. And in both of these books, the Senator returns in his ruminations about reform to two of the great examples of such revolts: the dethroning of Speaker Cannon in the House by a Progressive-Democratic coalition, and the ruthless capture by the President's men of the Democratic caucus in the Senate, which paved the way for the first two years of Wilson's administration. But I ask the reader (and the Senator) to speculate also for a moment on the relation between Wilson's unique two years of peacetime parliamentary rule and the following summary statement of the Senator's thesis:

> In the absence of crisis, Congress cannot and will not act affirmatively except under a strong President who has a clear mandate from the people, not only because of the separation of powers and the way Congressmen and Senators come to office, but also because of the congeries of rules and customs which favor inactivity.

Yet Wilson had no clear mandate from the people, being a minority President; he was able to be a strong President for a while only because of the Young Turks' revolt in the House which had been led by Norris (a Republican) *two years before Wilson's election*. My simple point is that there must be a great deal else involved in the occasional functioning and the ordinary malfunctioning of our weird system than merely the determination of a Chief Executive to be "strong."

No, Senator Clark. As you well know (and will, I hope, some day write about), the real problem is the Democratic party. When we are all done analyzing Congress, including "the rules, parliamentary procedures, practices or precedents of either house of Congress, or the consideration of any matter on the floor," it becomes clear as crystal that Congress was molded, both in its origins and development, by the South; and that today the last stronghold of the South is not merely in Congress but more essentially in the Democratic party—and is preserved in Congress mostly through the Democratic party. Obstruction was developed to the level of a high art, utilizing any passing procedural debris—like the Parisian art of *objet trouvé* and the *collage*—by the Southern Democrats and only by them. Others are merely imitators—like the post-Civil War Republicans who adapted Southern premises and techniques to enforce non-rule for the benefit of the plutocrats.

The purposes, of course, may change: at one time, a Republican will perfect his control by destroying an element of Southern obstructionism—as with "Reed's rules" in 1890. Later (we are still living with it today) he will, failing of full control and becoming himself a minority obstructionist, join with the Southern parliamentarians in a new collaborative work of anti-legislative art. Be that as it may, the primary problem remains party; the details of reform are secondary. And behind party is money, including the patronage Senator Clark disdains. But as the history of the Reformers in New York suggests (and a patrician like Senator Clark ought to take note), only neutral, decent, *rentier* money can, initially, save us from the unpleasantness of "patronage."

The famous revolt against Speaker Cannon, in which Senator Clark places so much stock, reformed the House by separating the considerable powers of the

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Speaker from the even greater powers of the Rules Committee: the Speaker was forbidden even to be a member. Today, the most piercing cry for reform is to subject the powers of the chairman of the Rules Committee to the party leadership—first among whom is certainly the Speaker. So, back to the beginning. What then, in perspective, is "reform"?

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

THEODORE SOLOTAROFF's *essay, "Irving Howe—The Socialist Imagination," appeared in our June 1964 issue.*

MARCUS CUNLIFFE *teaches in the department of American studies at the University of Manchester in England.*

HAROLD TAYLOR *is a former president of Sarah Lawrence College and the author of* On Freedom and Education.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, a new contributor, *was formerly associate editor of the* New Leader. *He is now a free-lance writer living in the South.*

MARVIN FOX, *who teaches philosophy at Ohio State University, writes frequently on Jewish theology.*

DAVID T. BAZELON, *the author of* The Paper Economy, *is a member of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington.*

"Preach, my dear Sir, a crusade against ignorance."
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Number 7

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